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With Peter Jackson's Academy Award™–winning epic motion picture trilogy drawing to a spectacular and triumphant close, Gary Russell's detailed research takes us back into the world of Middle-earth, to relive all the visual drama and excitement of *The Return of the King*.

The Art of The Return of the King illustrates the creative development of the film from sketch to special effect and features 600 images, most appearing nowhere else. This fully authorized book includes pencil sketches by Alan Lee and John Howe, costume designs by Ngila Dickson, magnificent full-color paintings by Jeremy Bennett, and prop designs, concepts, sculptures and digital artwork from Weta Workshop and Weta Digital. From Minas Tirith to Mount Doom, from the Army of the Dead to Shelob the monstrous spider, all the spectacular landscapes, characters and creatures are covered in stunning detail, including concepts that did not make it into the final film.

To accompany this wealth of imagery, detailed and informative commentaries appear by all the featured artists and designers, together with a special afterword by Peter Jackson. Their personal thoughts and explanations offer unique and fascinating insight into how *The Return of the King* was brought to life. An artistic journey begun in 1997 reaches its glorious conclusion within these pages, giving the reader a unique chance to witness the creative process that led to one of the most spectacular movies of all time.

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GARY RUSSELL has worked widely in media, as a television actor, script consultant, magazine editor, reviewer, novelist and audio producer. A relative latecomer to the *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon, his previous nonfiction publications include books on *Frasier*, *The Simpsons* and *Doctor Who*, and the acclaimed *The Art of The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Art of The Two Towers*.

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THE LORD OF THE RINGS™

The Art of THE RETURN OF THE KING

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THE LORD OF THE RINGS

The Art of THE RETURN OF THE KING

GARY RUSSELL

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON • NEW YORK • 2004

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pages 2–3: Frode faces the Witch-king at Amon Hen, color painting by John Howe
page 6: Mount Doom erupts, color study by Jeremy Bennett;
page 7: Minas Tirith under siege, color study by Jeremy Bennett;
page 8: Cirith Ungol tower, color study by Jeremy Bennett
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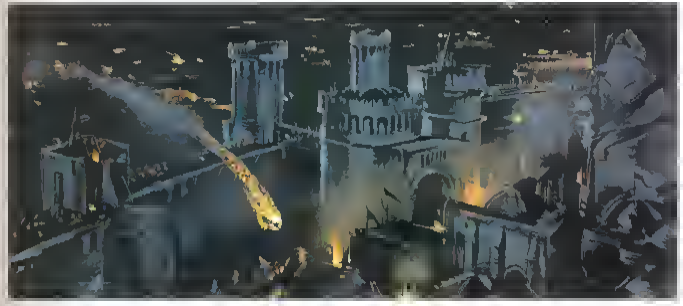

Foreword

A [illegible] Middle-earth [illegible] books I [illegible] have [illegible] design work. If this [illegible] *The Art of The Ret[illegible]* [illegible] the ultimate dessert with [illegible] Jackson [illegible] Morwal the liqueur [illegible] and must-have [illegible]

Like [illegible] wall with the splendor of the artwork [illegible] volume [illegible] the previous two volumes and [illegible] before you. I wish I [illegible] all I had as a page [illegible] book with [illegible]

[illegible] I felt great [illegible] at [illegible] through [illegible] appreciation to all the people [illegible] who [illegible] and [illegible] all the wonderful others who [illegible] help [illegible] Hardie [illegible] group of [illegible] Bruno Bergonzi, Book Art [illegible] Gareth Wright [illegible] Lure Books Ltd [illegible] New Zealand, Judy Allen, Jane Allen, Chris Cooper, Alyson McRae, Hannah Burchill, and [illegible] all the wonderful put out and delightful Melissa Booth with [illegible]

Gary Russell
August 2003

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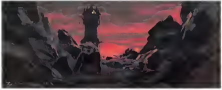

Introduction

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painting by John Howe with him dressed as Gandalf. I looked at it and said there was no point in redesigning it. That's one of those things. You pick your battles and that was not a battle. It was a beautiful image and spoke volumes for how Gandalf is and we worked off that. The bloody hat was of course the most difficult thing of all. Ian McKellen hated that hat. We all hated that hat. Yet there are moments in the film when the hat is just Gandalf. I remember all of us trying to manoeuvre the arc of the story with Pete in order to get rid of the hat. We failed!

"We started doing the drawings, always giving Peter three options when we could because he liked to have options. He doesn't like to be cornered, and given a *fait accompli* and neither should he. But we found that sometimes we simply didn't have the time – you can't get too tied up doing a pretty picture so what I started doing was just making the costumes. A brief scribble and I'd drag a few pieces of fabric over and say we'll make one out of this, we'll make another version like that and so on. Peter preferred a detailed visual anyway – not a drawing but the actual thing. We would make full costumes and say 'Here you are – like which one?' Of course, we'd still end up with the odd disaster when he'd say, 'Oh no, none of those are what I want.' But you had to take a deep breath and go on because there can only be one team leader here. And when we got it right it was always a delight. And often our favorite one!

"One of the biggest headaches was size. Because you had a hobbit of a normal height and a hobbit of story height – 4 foot 2 – you had to make sure that you could completely remake all the garments in scale. That means you twice had to make or create the buttons, you had to redo every amount of stitching at its scale, you had to have the fabric woven at its scale so that the two would move the same on a small person as it did on a large. Then you had the other version of this situation which was that Gandalf had a big-guy version of him that would interact with the Elijah Wood-height hobbit. So you would be making a Gandalf hat that was like a massive lampshade.

"I also played a part, too. You start the story with the hobbits who are very rustic – browns and yellows and greens and just generally cheery people. You move from there to Bree, which was a deeper, darker, dirtier version of that part of the country. You go from there into the world of the Elves, which is a completely different thing altogether. And then you go to the two different kingdoms of Men. As described in the book, the Gondorians were an ancient, ancient civilisation gone to seed. The Rohan people were much more rural... of the land, of the horses. So the choices were clean people or dirty people. And Peter loves dirt! We were in dirt up to our eye-brows. Basically if you weren't an Elf you were a dirty person.

"I am incredibly proud that the [illegible] the hobbits go right through [illegible] works all the way. They're desperately simple and for them to survive and [illegible] them through a three-film arc and [illegible] single moment's doubt that the look was the right choice for those characters [illegible] satisfying. It was subtle. I don't want to [illegible] Oh wow, there's a fabulous frock [illegible] watching the film, I want to [illegible] there's a fabulous film. Similarly [illegible] indeed, the whole Fellowship [illegible] work. [illegible] interesting characters, incredibly [illegible] dirty and non-fairy story. And with the [illegible] Liv Tyler's coronation costume is just [illegible] Everything about that came together [illegible] incredibly simple costume that [illegible] like a million dollars."

Dan Hennah is the trilogy's Art Director, based at the charmingly named Three Foot Six Art Department. Taking over from Grant Major, Dan had an overall eye for the whole production, coordinating between Alan Lee, John Howe, Paul Lasaine and Jeremy Bennett in the Pre-Visualization (or Pre-viz) side of things, the work going on at both Weta FX and Weta Digital, as well as running his own team who built the sets, props – except anything armory based, which Weta handled. Dan is also the writer you'll find further on in this book talking through the props designs of the Three Foot Six Art Department. With all this to manage, I first asked Dan if he ever thought he was insane to have taken this all on in the first place.

"No. In fact, sanity wasn't even really close to me in the first place. Can't have been to do all this! It's all meetings, meeting, meetings – well it was at the beginning. I would sit down with Alan Lee and Paul Lasaine – latterly Jeremy Bennett – and Richard Taylor, with my team of draftsmen going over their concepts and [illegible] Then when they'd gone back to the more [illegible] down with my team and start breaking the [illegible]cepts down into component parts and drawing them up as architectural designs, with scale on them and measurements. We'd quickly identify all the parts that needed further design work that Alan would then come up with – stairs, cobbles, bits and pieces all over the place – and we would incorporate those.

"Communication was essential between all these disparate departments so that we could successfully incorporate everyone's thoughts and needs into the set and prop designs. Once we had that, we would take those to Peter, who checked and signed off on them. Everything went through that procedure, including Alan's sketches. Alan would do two or three and Peter would pick one of them. Once we had a sign-off on something, we'd put a budget together because it's all very well building these things but you've got to build them to a price. Yet, unusually, it wasn't a case of telling Alan or anyone else to draw something that could be done

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to Budget X – it was [illegible] a more fluid. If it was [illegible] well it was never too high [illegible] but if it was ever too much, we would [illegible] in consultation with Peter modify those drawings to suit what he wanted to shoot. Once we had a budget that was acceptable we would start buying materials and putting bits into it.

"It was a relatively slow process to begin with. When we first got the storyboards (and I'm going back quite a few years now), which was probably about six months before the start of shooting the film, we worked a lot of early mornings having meetings with Peter, Weta Digital, the assistant directors, the producers, etc. [illegible] and we'd all sit around this table and storyboard by storyboard go through and Peter would basically tell us: 'This is live action but we don't need to build that because that can be a miniature, but this piece here is a real piece of set.' Frame by frame. Now it sounds pretty clever and very [illegible] in fact nothing ever follows the plan. It was a good plan and it worked really well at first but obviously things changed and [illegible] diverged from it one way or another. But on a day-to-day basis at least we had a plan and knew what each of us was contributing to which moment in the story.

"Take Minas Tirith for example. That's a big [illegible] set. We built it out in a quarry, and it's [illegible] seven or eight stories high. Big streets [illegible] what we built was a very small part of the overall image. John Baster and Mary [illegible] Weta Miniatures had built a model of the whole city so you would see it from a great [illegible] sitting at the plains. At Three Foot Six [illegible] the main gate and the courtyard inside [illegible] main gate the area that was a serious big [illegible] taken from concepts and designs by Alan or John. We also built a couple of [illegible]ng sets, but Miniatures had built Grond [illegible] large battering ram. So they could use plates of our doorway with people running [illegible] and they could put in a miniature [illegible] smashing the doors down. We built two [illegible] of battlements: one that was further up in [illegible] and one that was the very lowest outer [illegible] and we used those for different [illegible] of the things. We also built the second [illegible] stuff inside the second gate and a couple [illegible] pieces of street. Of the third gate we only [illegible] odd pieces so that you could get the feel that you were manoeuvring your way [illegible] some old city and if you looked one [illegible] down the street it was one street, and if [illegible] looked the other way it was another street. [illegible] built a siege tower so a couple of real [illegible] – a twenty to [illegible] thing that's about four [illegible] high that could roll to its station and [illegible] of which the Uruk-hai and Orcs could [illegible] streaming out. The siege tower Grond [illegible] the Orcs had all been initially designed by [illegible]'s team at Weta FX.

"[illegible] what Weta Digital did with that was [illegible] live-action that looking further along, the wall where there were meant to be other siege towers doing the same thing and then create those additional siege towers. And in the same shot the little city wall beyond that would have been made by Miniatures so there were three elements happening at once. Then our physical effects team would be firing burning straw bales across the wall. Digital visual effects would also add additional fireballs rising up so the elements were multilayered and took a lot of cooperation and planning. And it works.

"Then there was overseeing color. That was a critical part of what I did. Just starting in Hobbiton and going on a sort of road movie as it were, colors leads us along. You go from Hobbiton, which is bright and wonderful and golden, to places like Bree, which are much grayer and bleaker. Then to somewhere like Rivendell, which is pastel and beautifully faded, much softer, gentler and warmer – not warm colors just a warmer feel to it. And so on until you get to Mordor. One of the things about Mordor is that it is dark anyway, so obviously the rock would have been dark and the buildings are dark. The whole color palette goes down. But at the same time you don't want to lose definition so you've got to keep enough to highlight the reds, therefore the red can play a big part at this point. The skies are supposed to be dark, everyone will have dirt on their faces and blood on their fingers. It's battle and carnage, but it's not like you'd see at a soccer game after everyone's left. It's more down a dark alley somewhere with no light and there's nothing bright or yellow or bright red or orange. It's really down.

"We did find that our moods changed depending on which section of the story we were working on. For instance, the Paths of the Dead, which were caves with skeletons and stuff in them definitely had an effect as you walked through them. We put Helm's Deep in a dull grey quarry and it was a really hard job for the guys doing it, hard to keep them motivated. And yet we built Minas Tirith in the same quarry and it was a totally different situation. It was a similarly sized set with similar physical problems – big stuff up high, strong winds occasionally – but the feeling was so different because Minas Tirith was nice and bright, whereas Helm's Deep was this grim, depressing place. Hobbiton was fun, just beautiful and bright, birds singing, flowers blooming: it was just a party.

"Hobbiton was also fun because it was a challenge to build an entire town into rather than on top of the ground. Once we found our ideal location, which was a bit flat, we dug holes, created mounds, roads, tracks and the huge party field. We added trees and other shrubbery to create this multilayered village. We took fifteen thousand cubic feet of earth from place A so we could build Bag End, and put that fifteen thousand cubic feet of earth somewhere else to create the party field. We even built an oak tree and

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[illegible] Bilbo plan[illegible]

We [illegible] the landlord. We [illegible] because [illegible] language and fill [illegible] hair the morning flat [illegible] foliage [illegible] had [illegible] and every [illegible] essentially the [illegible] and things in the prop [illegible] there and that left [illegible]

[illegible] We found a little loca[illegible] hours drive from Christ[illegible] drive from a nature [illegible] I went there to look us [illegible] I'm walk from the road through [illegible] hill where we wanted [illegible] Golden Hill and do a survey. So we [illegible] road behind us and built another [illegible] of road up toward the hill. And all the [illegible] was that there. This Golden Hill was [illegible] high and banded, finer long, and [illegible] style and we were pinning it in an [illegible] one night, they had 80 mph winds! But the Golden Hill was still there the next day. We [illegible] hard [illegible] wall. We did lose a few banner heads, wooden ones that is, but we managed to yank them back on but that the risks involved in filming in such a beautiful stunning plant extension weather in government land, I think and there is a farmer who farms sheep [illegible] and a Maori [illegible] has some say in what happens to us. So we had to be really sensitive and everything, we had there we took care, and we command all the puffers and all the banning [illegible] and even some Lorry stems has gone back to where I was. But one of those responsibilities that you have to take on board and do it right.

One thing that naturally crept up to convey season with people involved with the trilogy is the use of color. Obviously choosing an location in New Zealand has offered up the chance to use some of the world's most naturally beautiful areas in their full glory. Even New Zealand's grass turns to bronzes than anywhere else. But what happens if on one day it's bright and sunny and on the next it's gray and miserable? Peter Doyle of The Lost House was responsible for using a brand new piece of software in order to correct and alter some every piece of footage shot for the movies. He explains what this process is.

"What we do is a color-grade the film digitally, actually, Peter's desire to give a sense of color to the film but which can't be just a pure tradition. He either be should in processing lab or you straight up of photography Andrew Lesnie the Director of Photography, has then a lot of the scenes knowing they'll be digitally manipulated later on. There are several reasons for that.

[illegible] Well [illegible] Alright [illegible] Alright [illegible] Alright

ITHILIEN

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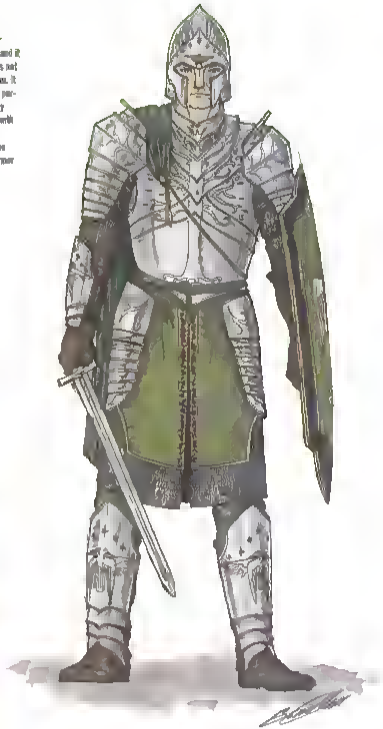
MORGUL VALE
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This painting was done to resolve how far away the Cross-roads would be and its position in relation to the Morgul Vale. I imagine the color of the environment to be quite washed out, with the Border mountains in the distance to feel heavy and oppressive. As approved artwork, an image like this is handed directly to the movie painter for further embellishment."

OSGILIATH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Faramir's valiant attempt to retake Osgiliath from the army of Orcs and their allies, who have occupied it. Often drawings like this are not done with a particular brief but are offered as a way of getting everyone thinking about a scene, and most importantly getting Peter to tell us what he may have in mind."

OSGILIATH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"One of many drawings done for the original Osgiliath set, which was constructed with a mixture of new building and his salvaged remains of earlier sets – considering that we had produced well over three hundred sets by this stage, this gave us plenty of choice.

'Osgiliath turned out to be one of the most satisfying sets that we built because, although there were occasional glimpses of blue screen, you could wander among ruins – something I've always loved doing – and forget that you were on a film set, for a few minutes anyway."

FARAMIR
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"This was close to the final design of Faramir's armor. It's very similar to the standard Gondor armor, although more ornate and slightly finer in cut. There are more fines in the chrome plate – and it has gold trim, but with the very recognizable symbol of the Tree and the seven stars. Faramir's not a man of pomp and ceremony. If has leading troops he wants armor that's going to protect him. It doesn't have to be flashy. What we did decide is that he has to stand out – not just for fitness purposes, but as the battlefield he has to be able to rally his troops quickly, he needs to be easily seen. So we chose a different color for his cloth, which was green, which sits here in his chainmail as Captain of his Rangers. Another symbol of Gondor which we adopted as Faramir's personal emblem is the hole carvers: we see Boromir on his grave, above the mantelpiece, and we his shield. It's and on his cross-guard of his sword, but we can't see it in this drawing. The armor is beautiful without being complex, as Faramir is all about form and function."



FARAMIR
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"This was originally an unused Elendil design, for the first film, but we considered it again for Faramir's armor. Its lineage from the prologue armor designs is obvious and because of that we decided it was probably too fancy for Faramir. The edges of the cloak are very richly embroidered, which on one level would befit the second son of the Steward of Gondor, but doesn't suit the character of Faramir. He's not a man of great flourish and show of wealth, he's a simpler more honest man than that."

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MORGUL VALE
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole

"This is a rough composite of the final painting, which shows the Cross-roads where Frodo, Sam and Gollum discover the statue of King, and in the distance the Morgul Vale which leads to Minas Morgul. In addition to the background of mountains and trees in the middle distance were also painted in. The smaller image to the right shows the original photographic plate, used as the starting point for the composite."

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MORGUL VALE
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This is a view from the valvet, in which Frodo, Sam and Gollum rest before they head into the Morgul Vale.

◇ ITHILIEN
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Another view of the Cross-roads. Dan had identified a spot there in Wellington which offered a group of ancient, ragged Macrocarpa trees as a setting for the scene. I did this drawing, based on a photograph of the location, to indicate where the statue should go."

ITHILIEN
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The consecrated statue of a former ruler of Gondor marks the Cross-roads between Osgiliath and Minas Morgul, and between Mordor and Ithilien. The ray of sunlight piercing the gloomy skies that covers Mordor and its immediate surroundings, is illuminate the wreath of flowers that lame group over the statue's fallen head is a powerful symbol of hope in the book and an image that we all wanted to capture."

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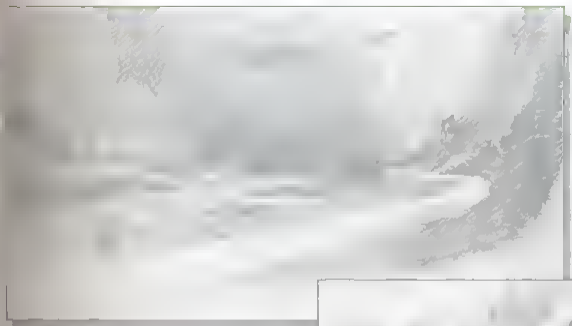
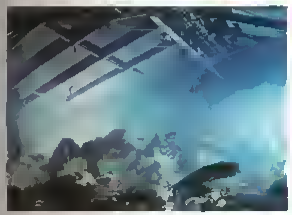
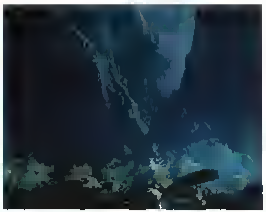


◇ CROSS-ROADS AT MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is just opposite Minas Morgul, where there's a pathway and a swamp. We see one of the Nazgûl as his full beast fly from the top of Minas Morgul and turn down into this valley. So this part was built as a set, and we created the whole environment from a mixture of miniatures and those scenic elements."

MORGUL VALE
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Peter asked for a set, between the Cross-roads and Minas Morgul, that would give us a little pool and a sweeping plain. He particularly wanted those hand of very twisted and twisted gorse bushes and other plants."

◇ MORGUL VALE
Sketch
Alan Lee
"We built a small set for the scene, in the shadow of the Morgul Vale, where Gollum has a conversation with his reflected image in a pool of water while Sam and Frodo sleep. The drawing to the left shows the tangled gorse bushes that Peter wanted, to make their campsite less broken. It looked like a simple set but the small team of genuine people, as well as Grant Major and I having worked through the night, were only just applying the finishing touches when the crew arrived in street at the following morning."





◇ MORGUL VALE
Digital matte painting
Karen deJong
"This painting was done for a tilt-down that whole pans down from the Morgul mountains and onto the sleeping hobbits. Meanwhile Gollum is having a conversation with himself by a pool. The far left image shows the miniature set that was built in the studio."

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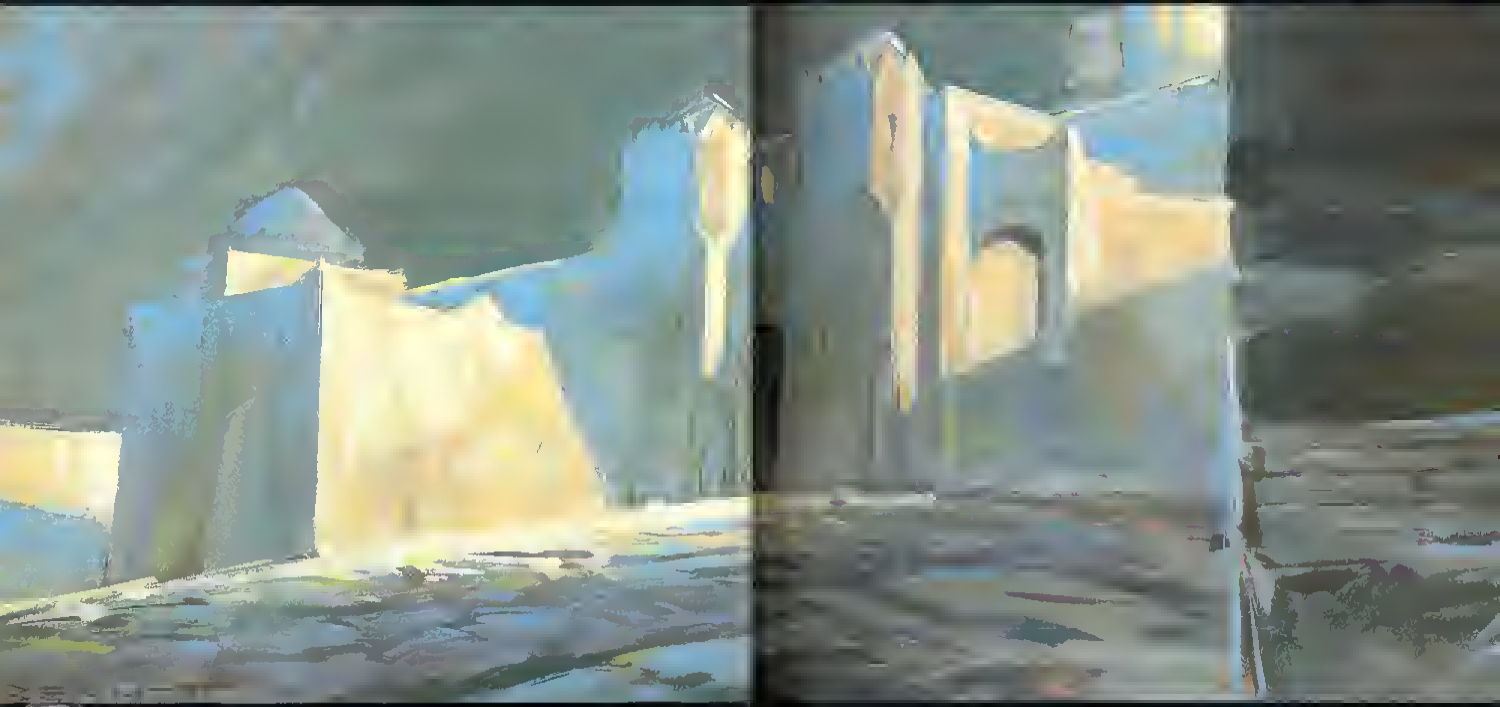
MINAS TIRITH



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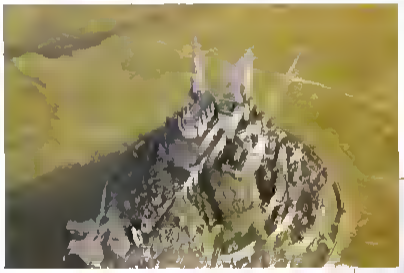
◊ **MINAS TIRITH**
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This drawing is a look at the city and the surrounding area. We originally built a large piece of cliff behind our seventy-second-scale miniature, but it proved too big to move into the miniature stage and so was reused for other areas of Middle-earth rock.

"The miniature of Minas Tirith was built over the course of several months by Richard Taylor's dedicated team of crafts people, with John Baxter and Mary Mackenzie playing leading roles as usual. This was well before the Art Department, would was going to be building the sets, had really from established, and before we knew in detail what was going to be happening in that particular part of Middle-earth. But we knew that there would be a number of very important scenes played out there, and that Peter, with his love of miniatures, would be strong at extremely, so the structure, though only at seventy-second scale, would have to stand up to very close scrutiny. There were sections built at fourteenth scale for some close-up shots, most notably the Court of the Kings itself and the surrounding buildings, and there were some of the most beautifully finished and convincing miniatures that were made for the trilogy."



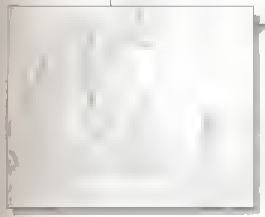
◊ **MINAS TIRITH**
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This shot is from a sequence in which Pippin is on his way to light the beacon fire. The view is from just below the beacon on the slopes of Mount Mindolluin. The miniature of the city formed the basis of this painting but took some reworking to integrate it into the composition."

◊ **MINAS TIRITH**
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The beacon, unsurprisingly, would Minas Tirith. There were several scenes – some now no longer in the film – in which Pippin is despatched by Gandalf to go and light the fire, and we see him climbing up the pillar of rock and then fiddling with the oil lamp that sits at the top waiting for the command to light the beacon and warn Gondor's friends that they should hurry to her aid. The idea of having a roof over the structure is simply because, in the unlikely would from lower lit so rarely, the occasional wet roof would be considered expendable, while a pile of wet shrub would be completely useless."

◊◊ **MINAS TIRITH**
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This was one of several color studies done of the several gates in Minas Tirith. As a color study, I was quite happy with the end result; however, it ended up looking more like a view you would find in Mordor rather than Rohan except Minas Tirith."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Tolkien's description of Minas Tirith in *The Return of the King* contained a few known facts that we did not wish to alter or ignore. I had drawn the city before but not in great detail, and there was a huge amount that would have to be added to make it credible as the capital city of an ancient culture. I started by taking the layout and dimensions that Tolkien had indicated and made a sketch composite so that Peter could see the overall shape. Once we were happy with that I began to explore the city in greater detail.

"I started with this view of the main gate protected by its barbican and towers and also indicated the seven turns of the city rising up behind it, with the huge pier of rock that bisected the city and also formed the foundations of the Court of the Kings seven hundred feet above."



MINAS TIRITH
Sketches
Alan Lee
"I then decided to indulge himself through the labyrinth of streets to see how the city might reveal itself to a visitor. These two drawings show details of the gate and the main square behind it. A public square should always have a statue in the middle, and Brigitte Wuest made a beautiful job of the large equestrian bronze – one of the city's founding fathers – that hung the gateway. There was one important detail in Tolkien's description that we decided to deviate from: he had referred to the outer wall being made from a hard black stone similar to that used of Orthanc, but we assumed to be able to meet the mountain with the surroundings that we would be constructing for it later, and a black wall would have made this more difficult. We did put some sources of black shard around the gate, similar to those at Cameth-brin, and we echoed that Dynastic should in other aspects of Gondor and her inhabitants. I don't know if Tolkien had the latter stages of the crumbling Roman Empire as much when he was thinking Minas Gondor under the Stewards, but it seemed an appropriate reference point for us."

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MEN OF GONDOR
Armor concepts
Warren Mahy

"These sketches are of early Gondorians. Pretty much the first ideas as we were working through the various armors. I was trying to follow the idea of the winged helmet and masked face in the picture below. The armor of the sketch far right is quite European, perhaps Grecian. The one near right looks more like a one of the Rohan or Rangers. It's interesting looking at these now and seeing how these influences flow through from one army to another – some of the ideas in the bottom sketch have actually shown up in the Orcs.

MEN OF GONDOR
Armor concept
Christian Rivers

"This was drawn long before my knowledge of how armor is constructed had evolved to a point where I could make better judgment calls on my armor designs. You can see the tree of Gondor on the shield. I was going to have the tree roots go down the world and then they would form a location for the armor stars at the bottom, but I haven't drawn it on here. The design has come a long way there."

MEN OF GONDOR
Armor concepts
Ben Wootten

"The Gondorian design entailed quite a high number of maquettes, version only to the think-ink when it came to armor design. The central one is an early attempt. At this point we hadn't decided what the construction of their armor would be, an area how much armor they much have. We were trying to find styles of armor we hadn't seen on film before, and this has quite an Eastern influence in that it has a long rimmed skirt. A look that didn't really go very far, but there are motifs that did, have as the pointed helmet and the very long there on the spear. Every maquette would have something in it. The one on the left is a later design. Things are beginning to shape up here – the helmet has a design that had begun to become quite definite by that point, and we were expanding the engraved wing design on it. The one on the right is there later in the process. The raised wing motif on the helmet is similar to the way that the Citadel Guard's helmets would up looking, which is more coincidence than good judgment!!

MEN OF GONDOR
Armor concepts
Warren Mahy

"We and design a lot of later when designing the new Gondorian armor. We and Gwen, Benson, even Hippolyte and they developed the there. After the version there you'll notice I was going thinner this arm it, widely the chain-mail. The soldier wears fully articulated plate armor. This one is a lot more European than anything else."

MEN OF GONDOR
Armor concepts
Warren Mahy and Dan el Falconer

Warren: "An early theme for Gondorian armor. If you look at the one above useful, it's a simple breastplate of leather armor, but then they've got chain-mail and a surcoat over it, and developed it from there. With the other one we were just trying to put that plate-feel to the design with an interesting breastplate shape, obviously using a blue steel look, but with a combination of other colors as well."

Daniel: "Inspired by some early Babylonian and Middle Eastern armor I suggested the one, right, as a possible style for the Gondorian troops. Alongside this influence there was an almost Baroque level of detailing and filigree work on everything, trying to create the impression of a culture hung up on the remnants of its own past glory and power.

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GONDORIAN BANNER
Sketch
Alan Lee
"It's not actually the final flag that Aragorn has, although it does look a HELL lot like it. We threw a lot of flags and heraldic for Gondor and all the other cultures, and this rather battle-worn one was done as a potential design for Aragorn's flag."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The Gondorian Tree symbol. This was for the plinth beneath the stone king figures in the Court of the Kings, as this was a bas-relief design that was sculpted and then molded and plastered on all of those plinths that the kings was standing on. I didn't want to overplay the crown and the stars as a lot of the stuff that we ran became it features heavily when Aragorn features, his inheritance, and so a lot of Gondorian emblems were just a generic tree symbol."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketches
Alan Lee
"I did a lot of drawings of statues around Minas Tirith, and behind everywhere also, and I tried to define slight differences in the style of statues found in Rivendell and those in this more classical environment. The left-hand two sketches are for a group of figures in the main courtyard behind the gates of Minas Tirith. They would be of royal lineage of ancient Gondorian history, but I had no particular persons in mind. They were just background artefacts, although they were huge figures, standing about fifteen feet tall. The right hand one, however, is quite specific — it's found in the interior of Denethor's hall and it is actually holder with the broken sword, Narsil."

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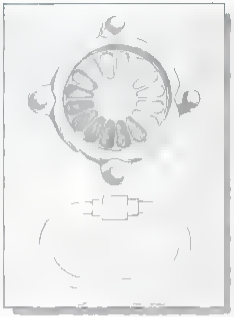
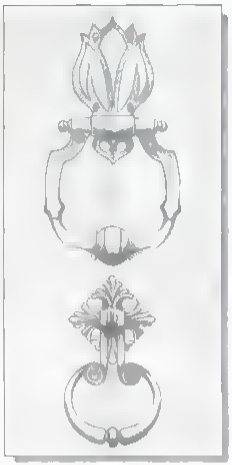
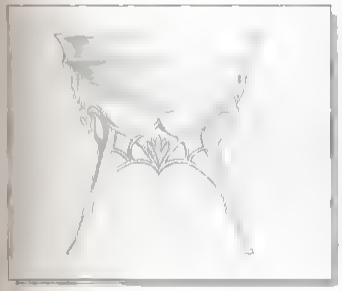




GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Those doorknobs and those are one one of those things that instantly say 'Gondorian' to me. The moment I look at one, it's a Gondorian piece in its simplicity with the embellishment — again we were thinking more arts and crafts then does but always with a flair. It's not pure to anything we have in our world, it's pure Gondorian with all those star influences, flower influences and the curves, but all put together in a fun pieces that are really practical. There were a lot of these made.

"We had 430 people in the Art Department — construction and prop-making, of course — and the ones who are not still with us are probably at home right now, making Gondorian door knockers or blowing Elven glass. They have taken away skills from working with us they never have they had. Or could those. That's been rewarding for everyone."



GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"There is no actually of Gondorian tableware. I imagined it was like going to pass grandmother's down and finding one of those bowls being held up by four elephants, all heavily embellished. There are parts in antiques there, something from the plains while the flower burst in the center is typically Gondorian."

GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Gondorian goblets in bronze, silver and pewter. And big question marks! We probably weren't sure whether to use all three materials, whether they were right for Minas Tirith. Or maybe it was a case of we only ancient use and we couldn't decide which. I have we built all of them, but for Boscthor we went with the silver one. The silver one certainly appears a lot more detailed. The bronze one seems more Elven, but then again there was an Elven influence on all the Gondorian designs because they were obviously friends with the Elven race."

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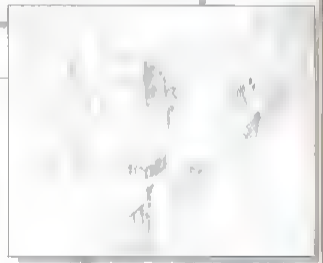
MINAS TIRITH
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is a very early study of the second gate, and it's obviously more of a drawing than anything. I think I must have had a little spare time on my hands ... It's more of a children's book illustration, although I quite like the simplicity of that."



MINAS TIRITH
Sketches
Alan Lee
"The top sketch is of the Lampwrights' Street, with the Old Guesthouse on the right-hand side leading up to the Second Gate. The drawing above gives a bird's-eye view of the road would then sharply to the right after turning through the gate and bends across the face of the city, along the second tier, and through the pair of rock cleft it reaches the entrance to its third level the sun sun the tunnel through the rock in the drawing on the left."

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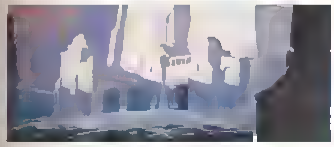

MINAS TIRITH
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"These are all studies of the second gate of Minas Tirith, where I was imagining different times of day. What would it look like first thing in the morning? What would it look like late in the day? It is quite fun to see how many variations you can get out of the same thing. But I was particularly pleased with the sun center left, even if it is possibly a little Disneyfied. It has an Arabian Nights feel to it. To me, this is early morning, with the light coming in, searching that back wall, indicating it's going to be a hot day. But the courtyard in the foreground is still quite cool. The sun below where we that it is late in the day.

"I felt that Minas Tirith had a Roman-esque flavor — I think that's what influenced Alan when he designed the environment. At this point in its history, it is quite a run-down place. You could imagine a hundred years before, or maybe more it was at its height and it was quite spectacular. Now, there are weeds growing out of cracks, and stains are visible on the walls. It's a little sad, a little melancholy, and I think this will come through in the film. Maybe that's what I was trying to capture, without even knowing it."

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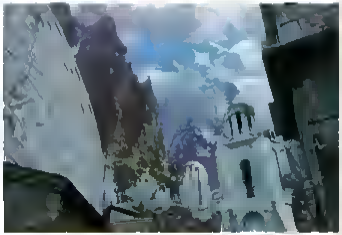
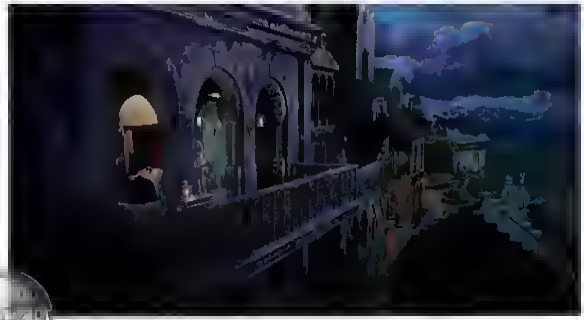


MINAS TIRITH BEACON
Original photography and digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This shot is the final frame in the sequence in which Pippin leaves Minas Tirith to begin his climb to the beacon. The camera tilts up to show its elevated location, and we see Mount Mindolluin way up above. The image on the right has had the matte painting roughly composited into place with the fire arrow plate and the miniature. Everything from the city on back is the painting; the directional lighting on the miniature was also painted on to unify the foreground and background."

◇ MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This features in the sequence in which Gandalf and Pippin are watching the Mordor fire painting and the dark clouds gathering, while they are talking about the coming battle."

MINAS TIRITH ◇
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is one of the drawings I did for Pippin's quarters. It has a balcony overlooking the Pelennor Fields with a view of the great mountains of shadow, the Ephel Duath. It is Pippin's first night in Minas Tirith: the beacons have been lit, and the forces of Mordor are about to strike."



◇ MINAS TIRITH
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"This shot was designed as a quiet interlude for Gandalf and Pippin. The Wizard smokes his pipe while contemplating the battle to come. The painting of the landscape beyond the fire arrow plate of the balcony, and miniature of the city buildings, was designed to be fairly inconspicuous and intended to merely suggest that it could be a quiet night anywhere."

◇ OSGILIATH AND MORGUL VALE
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"This night-time arrow painting presents Gandalf and Pippin's view of Osgiliath and the Morgul Vale just prior to the Minas Morgul beacon being activated, signalling the mass exodus of the Orc army."

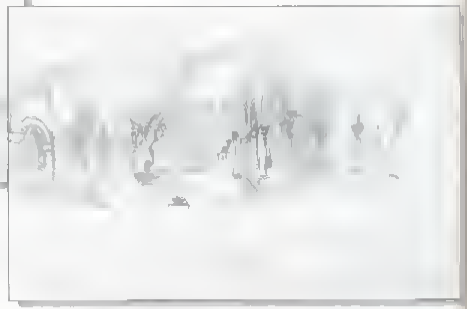
◇ MINAS MORGUL BEACON
Digital artwork
Alan Lee
"This view from Pippin's balcony, taking in the Pelennor Fields, Osgiliath and the blast of light from Minas Morgul, which signals the start of the Witch-king's attack on Gondor."

Scanned by Bvana

MINAS TIRITH ◊
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is quite close to the top and shows one of the gateways and the placement of a trebuchet. I did large numbers of drawings of every angle on Minas Tirith really, and this is just one little corner."

MINAS TIRITH ◊
Sketch
Alan Lee
"A very loose detailing sketch for part of Minas Tirith. The whole process of designing the city was a long and organic one, and this was sent long before work on the miniature actually started."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Another angle on the Houses of Healing, showing a view through the colonnades to a fountain (all good places have fountains) which was one of the first things my daughter, Virginia, was put to work on when she came out to join us. There was a huge amount of decorative detailing in every angle of Minas Tirith, and this is one little corner, from the capitals of pillars to monumental statues, the excellent sculptors, Brigitte Wanat, Natalie Stannsforth, Kirk Maxwell, Heather Meloth, Gary Hunt, Virginia Lee, Sam Gonet and Ra Vincent did a wonderful job in creating the aged splendor that we needed to see in the important environment."



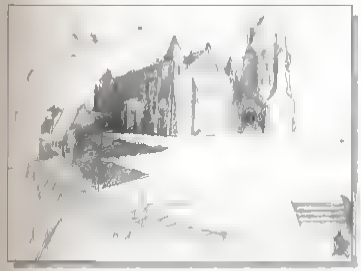
MINAS TIRITH ◊
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The Houses of Healing are set around a courtyard and have a peaceful monastic air of seclusion and retreat. Though we see them also to feel, in the aftermath of the battle for Minas Tirith, this a human field hospital, overflowing with wounded survivors."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketches
Alan Lee
"After a steep climb and dozens of drawings, we finally reach the seventh gate [far left] at the entrance to a tunnel leading up to the topmost courtyard, with the dead White Tree of Gondor watched over by the Fountain Guards [left]."

MINAS TIRITH
Digital matte painting and composite
Ronn Brown
"This painting of Mount Mindolluin was done for a number of scenes, including the one where where Gandalf rides up to the Court of the Fountain, and a meeting with Denethor. If you look very closely you will see the beacon tower nestled on the mountain slope."

◊ MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"There is a very early attempt at figuring out what the exterior of members Hall should look like. You can also see where an earlier drawing had overflowed on to the top of this sheet, as well as other evidence of an overworked imagination."

◊ FOUNTAIN GUARD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is an early design for a Fountain Guard. This guy's a little more exotic in appearance than most Gondorians."



CITADEL GUARD ◊
Armor concept
Daniel Falconer
"Occupying a midpoint between the elite Court of the Fountain Guards and the standard Gondor infantry, the Citadel Guards were designed fast, and fairly quickly. Their armour was really a blending of the two, combining elements from both the Fountain Guards and the infantry into one armour design that was both functional and still partly ceremonial. Where the Fountain Guards had sea birds wings upon their helmets, the Citadel Guards had the wings of ravens."

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COURT OF KINGS
Sketch
Alan Lee

"This was built as a miniature, at ½ scale as part of the whole city, and at ½ scale for the close-up set extension work for the scenes that take place on the upper level of Minas Tirith."

COURT OF KINGS ◇
Color study
Jeremy Bennett

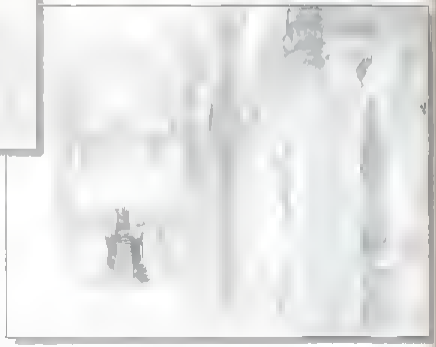
"This is a study of the interior of the citadel with Gandalf and Pippin in the foreground. I think I and a drawing of Alan Lee's to follow as they hadn't built the set. I did have some floor plans, however. We're looking at the miniature and the depth of field that made be possible – I've made the figures in the foreground big, just to accentuate the height. I'd like to think the environment would be very dark and pretty grim, pretty sad. Now one imagine Denethor sitting at the base of the throne, cast in shadow."

◇ COURT OF KINGS
Sketch
Alan Lee

"These doors seen at Denethor's Hall, and we used them for the scenes shot on our outdoor location, we then moved them to the end of our large interior set for Gandalf and Pippin's encounter with Denethor."

MINAS TIRITH ◇
Sketch
Alan Lee

"This is a drawing for John and Mary and the other miniature builders to work from. It comprises two partial designs for the topmost tower, the Tower of Ecthelion — there were some additional modifications and there and don't include the very top. The tower on the left was the one that we finally went with."



MINAS TIRITH ◇
Sketch
Alan Lee

"The interior of the Court of Kings, showing the pillars and arches, some of the statues that line the aisles and the huge crown that hangs from the ceiling above the empty throne — and the Steward's chair that sits at its base. This set was one of the last to be built during principal photography and it was one of the most frantically busy periods for the Art Department, as well as for everybody else. Dan Hennah, Brand Wayne [illegible] spent a lot of time on this particular set because it was, for some of [illegible] to be a final destination and it needed to be a worthy home for [illegible]gorn and Arwen, as well as an atmospheric setting for our first encounter with Denethor."

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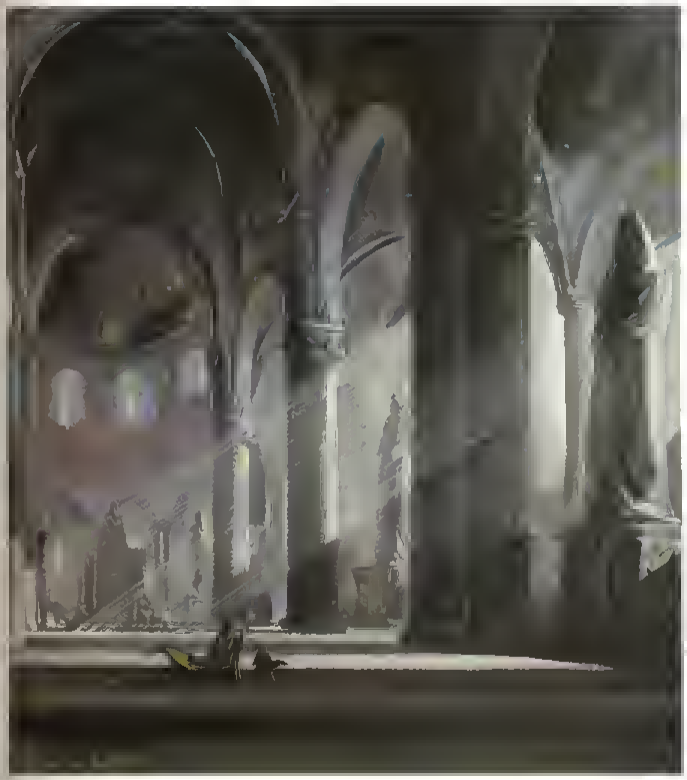

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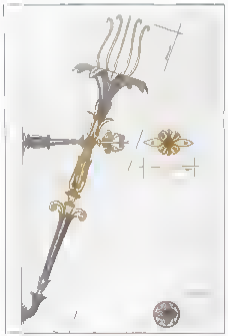
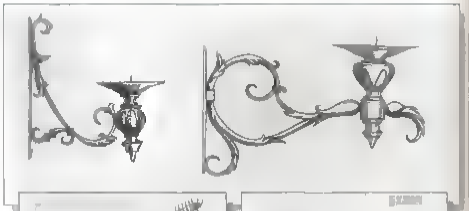
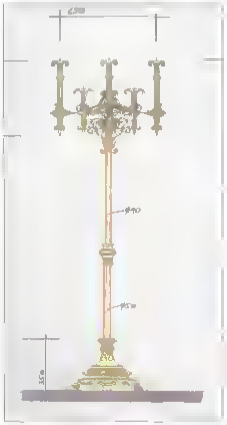
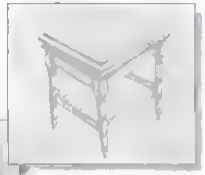






GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot S x Art Department
"Up at the top left is a lovely piece, but it wasn't actually used: it was too ornate even for Gondor. Please simplify for Sion gate, it says. I wonder d we ever did?! It is beautiful, over the top beautiful, but demonstrates the sort of detail that went into a discarded piece. Next to that, ornate candleholders, again a little fiddlier than most Gondorian stuff – I imagine a lot of this was done before we really settled on a final generic design concept for cinema. Below these, a couple of designs for internal braziers. These are not on the battlements and not on the streets: long braziers I'm putting logs into. As with the Cirith Ungol braziers, cinema were fully practical. Beneath cinema are a couple of drinking vessels. Again, I've a feeling these didn't make it beyond paper. The upper vase was done for cinemaw, but the few embellishments are too fussy for Gondor. In the top left is something similarly ornate, but as it was for the Court of Kings we went with it. It's a Citadel Court candlestick, cast set of brass but then hand polished back to look as if it were hand carved. Finally, down below, furniture rollers, little models that would be attached to wooden furniture or corners of chairs and doors to make cinem Gondorian. Very fiddly. We must have produced hundreds of below."

GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Our design for Gondor was influenced quite a bit by the Italianate look, and some of these candlestick holders show that. On the previous page was said, Please simplify. Here are the simplified versions. This simplicity is a 'less is more' statement. We could have embellished the central young person in the mid-to-top sketch with a floral design, but it was more important to consider the Gondorians' ideas, functional flow. On the far left is the same basic idea, except on a tall stand. You can see that it has been overdrawn – done after the original concept – to give the stand a little more preciousness. Beneath cinem is a drawing center, its design drawn from Mid European, eighteenth-century period but adapted to a very Gondorian style. This is here the Houses of Healing and is used by Eowyn. Despite being of wooden stability I'm sure she wouldn't object to having this kind of elegance here heere!"



GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot S x Art Department
"The two pieces above and left are from the Houses of Healing. Again, as with everything in Minas Tirith, we went for a more Italianate design: lots of stone and where cinem was wood it was very carefully worked with straight and clean lines. Many of the decals have the previous page were crafted as tetanic onto cinem panels. The panels themselves would have have molded, we would have hand-carved just one panel and then molded from that, making up a whole lot that we cinem glue onto the cinem of drawers, boxes and so forth."

GONDORIAN FURNITURE
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"This wall torch was practical in that it held the actual fiber needed to be soaked to cinem the torch work. cinem again, we were going with curves, leading to straight bars then topped off with a bit of jewelery – it was the Court of the Kings after all. When we started this project, bearing in mind the materials and the sources I imagined we'd have difficulty in finding people with the skills to have make all these things. Therefore my first job back in November 1998 was to read through 200 CVs of Art Department people who said something to offer. Of those, we took on probably half of those I then had to find people who cinem do specific things that we didn't have CVs for. Like glassblowers, armourers, blacksmiths – the older trades. One of the advantages of filming in New Zealand was that I knew where to look for these craftsmen and women. I guess the same thing would be true in Britain or America where during the 1960s and 1970s, that huge alternative lifestyle upsurge occurred and people took great delight in radio covering old skills. They turned those skills into lifestyles, and many of those people who did that forty years ago are still around or their children are still around because they believed that alternative lifestyle was important. New Zealand's quite a small country so meeting have that ora myself I had little difficulty in finding these people, mainly on the West Coast, or in Nelson, which is a big art centre. Thank goodness they or their parents came to New Zealand and dropped out!"

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FOUNTAIN GUARD
Maquette
Sacha Lees
"This maquette was sculpted to further investigate in three dimensions my concept of the Gondorian soldier; the design group was influenced by Roman southsun with regard to the Gondorian cape and the maquette is no exception. I wanted to create a feeling of power, so I used a lot of fabric within the design to help create fullness and movement. I really enjoy the final result of the Gondorian soldiers that our team produced.

PIPPIN
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"Pippin owes allegiance to Gondor but instead of being embraced with the same enthusiasm that Merry and Aragorn by Théoden, he's billeted out to Boromir. So the armor he ends up with is far more makeshift and hurriedly tailored for him than Merry's. These are basic Gondorian components but Howe is too nice. The leather tunic with the silver Tree on it, and the beautiful little collar, that would easily be a pageboy's uniform. The throw skirt and sleeves could be trimmed down, and his cut-off breeches and leather armguard are all easily modifiable. It's not as beautiful, but still an improvement, so the solution we came up with for Merry

"Pippin is still wearing the Elven leaf brooch and he's still strung the gray Elven cloak — a connection mentioned in the book, around they don't have much in size. The helmet, however, was harder to justify. It carries the same black feathers as the Citadel Guard design of the time, giving him immediate status as Gondor, although he was still looked upon as a bit of a servant."

FOUNTAIN GUARD
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"One of the first drawings I did for anything to do with Gondor. It was an ink drawing done on the bus on my way to work. I used to spend an hour a day traveling, my sketching time. There are some ideas here that made it into the final design, such as the heavy shoulder pauldrons over the top of the black tabs and the long chain skirt and long knee to the clothing. Lots of blue as well. It's quite a royal colour, the pigment for blue is quite hard to find in nature, and without artificial dye, we are here [illegible] it's a very rare color, so it could of wealth and a strong civilization that's got the [illegible] wants on that dye. It speaks volumes for the age and wealth of the culture."

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KNIGHT
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"This is an early drawing of a Knight of Dol Amroth. We were really keen to use these guys in the film. They are, if you like, the French heavy cavalry of Middle-earth — everything that a chivalrous knight should be. This drawing is definitely pre-John Howe — it demonstrates my cool look of understanding for the construction and use of armor. What I still have mixed, despite the "terrible" drawing, are the strap middle of the swans around the fork and on his around and the [illegible] a very noble color — on the half-billed he made have not a striking figure. Sadly they don't be in the Films, but I suppose that's just as well — they knight have ended up looking like this drawing!"

BEREGOND
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"Beregond is one of the Citadel Guard, the elite troops of the Gondorian army, answerable directly to the Steward. They would probably act as his personal guard as would of red cloth and on the battlefield. The black feather crest denoting him as a Citadel Guard was later removed in favor of a secondary engraved metal piece that was added to the helmet. It looks okay in the drawing, but it looked less effective as real life. What we did retain was the slightly more embellished skirt and the black cloak. Otherwise his armor is almost exactly the same as the standard Gondorian soldier, the only difference being the gold trim on the helmet, which would not be present on anyone else."

THE STEWARDS TOMB
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This was designed for a very important moment in the film, when Faramir is about to be set on fire by Denethor. We had to design the tomb, and in particular the plinth and the bodies, for all the scenes around that, so we had to imagine how the Citadel Guards would be carrying Faramir and how they would place him on the pyre. We came up with a long, slatted box, supported by swords, which would be withdrawn after the dying, but not quite dead, Faramir was in place."

MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The Halloween on the rear of the Court of Kings, below the towering slopes of Mount Mindolluin. John and Mary were able to take drawings like this and produce a highly detailed three-dimensional replica. To the left you can see the ramp leading down to the entrance to the Stewards' Tomb."

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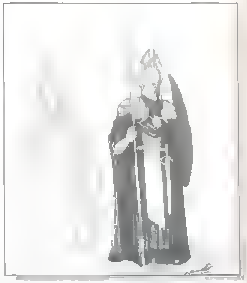
MINAS TIRITH
Sketch
Alan Lee
"One of several versions of the White Tree of Gondor. This was going to have to be seen in both its dead and its rejuvenated state. I treasure a lovely memory of seeing Brian Massey's tree with four set dressers perched in it like birds, attaching thousands of blossoms to its dead twigs. I know that in the book the White Tree is replaced by a sapling made Aragorn finds on the slopes of Mount Mindolluin, but at this stage in the film allowing the new king to go for a stroll in the mountains wouldn't have been making the best use of the Tree — and seeing the Tree reborn is such a beautiful moment."



FOUNTAIN GUARD
Armor concepts
Ben Wootten
"These later drawings of the Fountain Guard are pretty close to the final design. What works in both of these are the very strong vertical lines: the cloak, tabard and chain mail skirt that go right to the floor, obscuring their feet, as we see a pillar of strength in these figures. The heavy shroud pauldrons over the cloak combined with a tall helmet makes them appear almost spectral, or wraith-like, in themselves. Their proud crest of pure white mare feathers is also a bold statement. These men have sworn allegiance to a lost cause by that may never return, but this is their job, they're guarding the dead tree - they're guarding the Fountain Court and they will die as with their lives. We made them even more dangerous and aloof by covering their faces with a black face mask. There is no bargaining with these people. They are like the Ringwraiths. They don't move, they don't speak. This is their lives, there is no one more zealous than these guys.

"I drew them having a short sword. It was nice, as it was different from the longsword you see the other troops carrying, and would be used only if someone got past their pauldrons. However, it was decided it looked a little weak, and so to further complete the vertical line we gave them a longsword, but in such a way that, rather than hanging at an angle like most swords, it hangs straight down at the leg. The sword we can see in the right-hand picture was replaced with a longer, more elegant version of the standard shield, with a different emblem on it. Rather than the wing shape, it is more of a traditional, but taller, Gondorian shield design."

FOUNTAIN GUARD
Armor concept
Dan el Falconer
"The Court of the Fountain Guard were described by Tolkien as having the wings of sea birds on their helmets. This proved quite an enormous to design. This is one of numerous suggestions we offered as to how this might be achieved."

FOUNTAIN GUARD
Armor concept
Ben Wootten
"The silver helm has a strong wing motif in the form of ornate cheek guards. This came through in the later helmets, but as an engraving across the helmet rather than a separate cheek plate. And the heavy pauldrons on the shoulders, over the top of a long black cloak, was a theme that stayed right through to the final design. The other thing we see here which is interesting is that their emblem still retains the arms of the king, their allegiance is to the Tree and the Court of the Fountain, and to the Steward of Gondor, and their job is to guard that sacred site until the return of the king. So they are a law unto themselves. Great tradition and honor is their job, possibly handed down from father to son."

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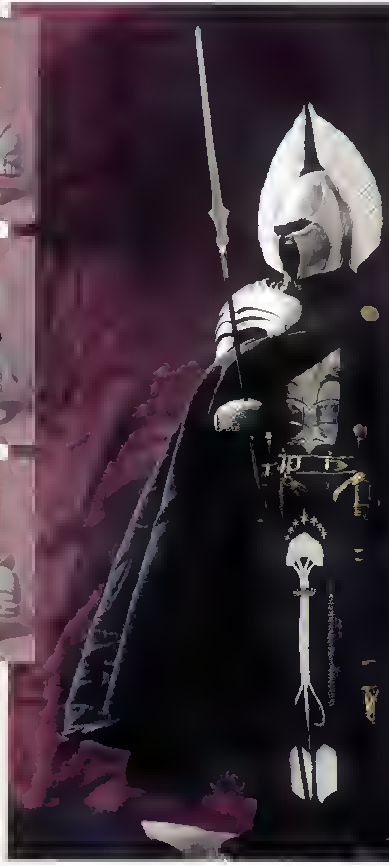

FOUNTAIN GUARD
Maquettes
Dan el Falconer

FOUNTAIN GUARD
Maquette
Ben Wootten
"The Fountain Guard sculpt is pretty close to the final look. Once Peter has seen a couple of rounds of drawings, and he's fairly comfortable that the direction we're going in is what he wants, 3D then becomes a requirement — it can be rotated and viewed from all angles. This is a lot easier to confirm it is the look he was after. So the maquette is a realization and a fine-tuning of what he saw in our drawings that he really liked. With the Fountain Guard, we pretty much got the say as to how the costumes looked because it was, on the Fountain Guard and even more so the Gondorian troops, far more of a component of the armor. However, there are reversals to that, which Costume has more input. Aragorn's quick-Gate outfit was more Nella's department. Here ours, so there were concessions made to fit with her designs. As a result, we're unlikely to do a maquette of Aragorn — we tend to do only our own designs when it is something that can't quite be visualized in a drawing. Maquette shooting doesn't give you an accurate representation of texture. A drawing can actually do a better job of showing how a quick sculpt, whereas a quick sculpt of armor, which is a solid object, is really useful. Also, maquettes were used if there was going to be a digital realization as well. We sculpt special maquettes for digital scanning after the final design has been agreed, a sculpt that is at least four foot tall. These are big models!"

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DUNHARROW AND THE PATHS OF THE DEAD

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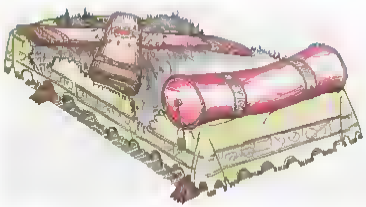
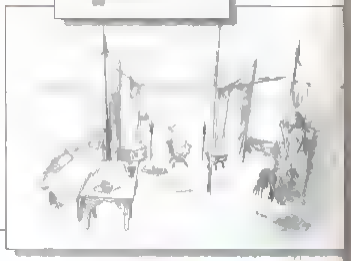


DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Théoden's bed. Lots of rich textures fit for a king. Even if he's on campaign, it'll have lots of throws on it, a bear skin, something to signify ceremonial hunting and comfort. I imagined the greens might be a little strong and the red probably was a little more found on the finished prop. We had a Fabric Department which was absolutely stunning, turned out amazing stuff: stuff you'd go looking for at fashion houses. The temptation with films is to always silkscreen the design straight on to the fabric and put it in front of the camera; you'd never know it isn't appliqué. In our case we had about a dozen fabric artists who appliquéd everything, sewed the gold braid on, everything. The level of detail that's there, still astounds me. And it's all the right fabrics: they used silk, and they used velvet, no expense was spared. It gives a richness and a depth that is really apparent, and then there's that tactile thing which works for the actors. Obviously, half of what we do is for the actors because only half of it is ever seen on screen. But when you do see these things, you can tell that it really is astral."

THEODEN'S THRONE
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is the throne from the Golden Hall, which we considered using at Dunharrow, but decided to replace with a more lightweight and utilitarian version — especially considering the difficult climb up to that plateau."



THÉODEN'S TENT
Sketches
Alan Lee
"This most sketch is an interior of the interior of Théoden's tent at Dunharrow, showing the arrangement of the various rooms a Rohan King might have taken with him on campaign. It's divided into three areas, with a bed for Théoden on one side, and for his guards or servants on the other, and a stand for his armor and his saddle and tack taking pride of place in the center. Adam Ellis did the color study below to sort out the placement of the banners and flags."

00 PATHS OF THE DEAD
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This was a quick study of the City of the Dead environment. [illegible] came thought to a [illegible] color palette. I [illegible] final look at a [illegible]

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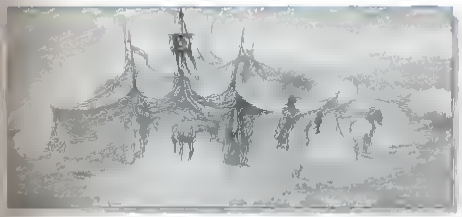

DUNHARROW
Sketches
Alan Lee
"These are all designs for the look of Théoden's tent and how it was situated at Dunharrow. They're quite close to the final result.

"The standing sketch are found on top of Dunharrow Plateau; they lead towards the Hornburg, and the Paths of the Dead."

DUNHARROW ENCAMPMENT
Digital matte painting
Max Dennisen
"This painting is the establishing shot for the Paths of the Dead sequence. It shows the king's camp at Dunharrow and the entrance to the Paths at the top of a precipitous, zig-zagging climb. The difficulty in this shot lay in trying to establish both the path and a relatively sombre, oppressive mood for what was basically a brightly lit daytime plate (left)."

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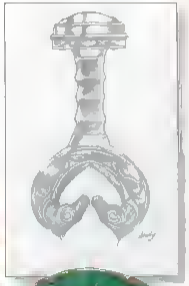
THEODEN
Crown and throne
Alan Lee
"I did a few sketches of Aring for Theoden's armor – they all feature the horse motif but vary in size and weight. He needed to that as if the crown still empowered and even when he's of his weakest, physically, when we first meet him.

"The throne was a challenge because although he's quite frail when we see him as it, it still has to look powerful – after all, he hasn't always been a confused old man. They did a beautiful job that the carpentry, because it was going to be featuring in important scenes and in close-up."

DUNHARROW
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Theoden's tabletop campaign table. Note the symbol that was developed by Alan Lee as part of Theoden's harness and part of his horse tack. The Queen of England wears a big badge that and the Ethel Lark built onto it. Well, this is Theoden's equivalent. So wherever you see Theoden's stuff, you'll see Sam symbol."

THEODEN'S SWORD
Pencil sketch
Warren Mahy
"This is a sketch of the final approved design for Theoden's sword hilt. It's based on one of John Howe's designs, featuring two typically Rohan horses on either side."



THEODEN'S ARMOR
Armor concepts
Daniel Falconer
"We and decided upon the Rohirrim that in quite some detail before we actually got to King Theoden. This was a fantastic collaboration between our design team and the armoursmiths who we and working with us. Early on, when we first started making armor for the various armies, it was a case of us Aring the design, sending it away, and then making it. But as time went by we all became more confident and started to move toward a more collaborative process. Eventually, the armor smiths would come to us and say, 'Hey, have you seen this? We can do this really cool thing' – and they would show us some new technique that they'd devised. So by the time we got to Theoden, there was much more toing and froing. I worked quite closely with Dave Gordine in the workshop, and together we develop of the look you see here, would in a brass armor that had has leather applied over it in a decorative pattern, and it still and the horses' heads and other heraldry of the Rohan people.

"Richard Taylor actually and so stamp leather as the would of the armor which as one will ever see. When Bernard Hill saw it as he put the armor on, he took, 'That's fantastic! I really feel like I'm a king! These little things help the actors [illegible] feel in character.

"[illegible] would have was emerged with the final design that [illegible] had done for Theoden's shield. The sword and a [illegible] the sun Aring the shield of the Royal Guards."

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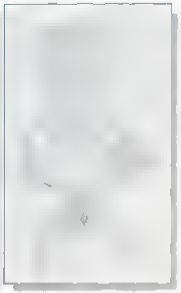
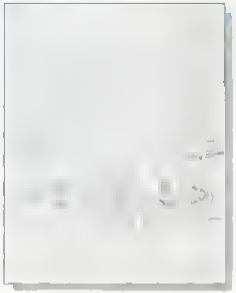


DUNHARROW
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"The thinking behind these was Napoleonic campaign chests but that more detail. The bears heads on the corners, the horses heads on the handles, a wolf's head at the foot. Coming from a history of hunters, horses obviously play a huge part in Rohan culture. The most important building in their lives would be the stables, and would be more embellished that that Aring rooms. After all, that's where you keep your horses; your wives could live anywhere!"



DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Theoden's campaign trunk. It and to withstand a certain amount of knocking around, that the embellishment you'd equite to see for a king. For the conceptual artists, it was fun for them to indulge all their fantasies on pieces like this, and can you imagine a culture like the Rohan and think what it's they like, and do, and think what you embellish the designs, make them you. Then you hand it on to the furniture makers and they make the trunk out of real oak. Three Foot Six is full of the most creative, and resourceful, fine-arts props department I've ever worked with. Which is exactly as it should be!"

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Everyone heads a spear rack, especially if you have more than one spear. Theoden probably and a spear carrier, so this is more for appearance's sake. Here, the banner have horrible dragons – there were some influences in Roman art other than horses: serpents, firedogs, et cetera, influences courtesy of John Howe or Alan Lee."

EDORAS
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"A weapons stand created by Alan. This is just so beautifully intricate for something that the camera will probably never go near. Some people that it must be frustrating to build things that no one notices, but when actors, such as Bernard Hill, say, 'I already know my lines, and my costumes are, but the Theoden feel about me, but when I walked onto that set and I was there, I was Theoden of Dunharrow.' When he said that, I knew we'd done something right, and it wasn't just Bernard: invariably again and again the actors, actresses, everyone said it. The directors and actors stand some in first thing in the morning to do their read-through, and they'd walk onto a set that was fully-formed, and stand there saying, 'Now, I really know I'm in the Golden Hall.' I was afraid that sounds I was feel the place, everything's right. I've always said that that sets are half and what you're going to see, and half about creating an environment that actors can act truthfully in. There's nothing more disappointing that walking onto a set and picking up, say, a knife and find what's a floppy bit of rubber. But if you went over to this weapons stand and put your hand on it you would actually feel it is wood and it's been carved and it's beautiful. Almost whatever moment let loose!"

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"The Rohan would have had flags and banners everywhere, and as our fabrics people went to great lengths to give us beautiful appliqué banners we went to great lengths to put them wherever you might see them. This is one of Theoden's banner stands: from would they hang. That's a prop sign chair in front, would was an absolutely beautiful piece – tooled leathers on each corner, intricate about Celtic weave, patterns up and down the slats in the back. If someone was allowed sits Theoden's throne, then he would be sitting in his chair with all these banners behind him, creating presence."

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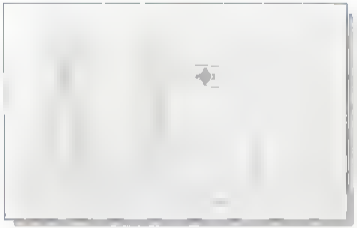

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"There must have been thousands of saddles, so what do you do with them? Put them on a saddle stand! Actually, they're great for dressing both the outside and inside of the chair. All-purpose set dressings! There were thoughts that maybe we were doing too much, but I believe we could never do enough. Go into your own home and look around and time think from moving house. You there you've probably got half a cupboard of stuff and you start putting it in the car and it just grows and grows until you suddenly find you there can't. So that was my thinking: the people, all people accumulate stuff. One of the dangers always in prop making, and in set dressing is you can go unmanaged, which is fine in a really stylized movie, but in general people thereabouts. Part of it is practical stuff and part of it is just I just good stuff. We all took the view that shelter was great as long as the shelter was real."

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Another bed, but this time for the captain. The difference between the king and the captain's pretty apparent. Once again, carved skins wherever possible, blanket rolls, the sort of thing you could transverse your saddle and ride all with. We tended to design Dunhing about usefulness but, decoration second."

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"The throne of a horse, and on this right is an attempt to give an idea of what length this stuff would be. The prop makers would make up the torch to be totally practical, so there would be a wrap-around of brass with the thorn set in it, and a big decorative candle made. So, fully practical, i.e. functional, all the there."

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"These are ideas for carvings and thorn details. An eagle's head, the chair, the Theoden cross with the circles. All beautiful pieces, nice to look nice to be around. People often wonder if we take them home at night, no keepsakes, but really all this stuff has a single purpose – the film, for dressing a set. Once it's been shot, you're finished with it and you move on. *The Lord of the Rings* has become such a huge part of our lives, such a familiar part of our lives, that it doesn't therefore novelty or collector's value that it might for other people, to us. They're just everyday items. Imagine if you lived in the 1850s and you threw an axe or would every day, it would have no and value to you. On weekdays you walk into an auction house and they're selling one for two hundred dollars! Whereas the eagle's thorn a twenty-dollar item that we're using every day so it meant nothing. At the same time, we all appreciate the beauty of such Ross and the work that went into it: the work that went into the drawing and those the work that went into carving that eagle's thorn and making sure the chair was the right size and so on."

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"Even the rugs needed designing. We talked about rugs having to be things that could travel, obviously. The Rohan wouldn't have glassware on the campaign – they'd be pewter or brass and they'd all stay and such. Gondor would the wooden and have a quick such and carry on. So and gig, we assumed would carry his own tankard or cup. The left-hand one is more of a ceremonial piece, whereas the other is an everyday travelling tankard. We made anything! We even made cutlery for Denethor at Minas Tirith when he's eating. It's really heavy in your hand, it's quite spiky and had a certain dubious appeal to it!"

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"I mentioned earlier that our fold away furniture was influenced by Napoleon's campaign chairs. That influenced us greatly in working out what Theoden would take with him on his horse. So this is a folding stool, something that would be comfortable to sit on, with a feel of the old Vikings. And this is Aragorn's first campaign. They have spent a lot of time out there patrolling the borders, [illegible] themselves pretty comfortable on the move. We were thinking of an army that was a cross between Redmoor-type nomads and Vikings."

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DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"We tried to there of everything, every accessory that might be needed on campaign. Theoden, with all this hefty armor, definitely needed an armor rack. There again, if you're going to make an armor rack for a long, and it looks like it was made for a long, so carved feet, carved stall. The bent brass shoulder pieces. I guess it's like going on the Queen Mary liner and seeing all the beautiful old clothing. We open up the cupboards and inside are clothing racks, handkerchiefs and ties, all labeled – it's that degree of detail we were trying to achieve."

DUNHARROW
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"This is a Rohan brazier. Braziers or all lanterns played a big part in Dwarf culture because obviously there's no electricity, and you have to have a lighting source. And wherever we place, we were trying to get a nice soft, warm light. Unless it's somewhere scary, and then you'd be going in a different direction entirely. This is primitive without being gross. We were definitely thinking gross with the Orcs, whereas for the Rohirrim it's something elegant from home that you'd have set there on the campaign and pack up afterward."

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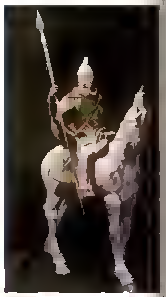
ROHAN WARRIOR
Pencil sketch
Sacha Lees
"I felt that the Rohan were a naturalistic culture, and this would be reflected in the crafts used to produce their armor, clothing and weapons through their textures and the use of natural materials. This particular illustration depicts a combination of leather, fabric, wood and some metals all achieving decorative, functional armor. The Rohan soldiers were also very connected with their close companion, the horse, so it was also adorned in much the same way as the soldier."

ROHAN WARRIOR
Maquettes
Daniel Falconer
"There was a strong Celtic influence in the Rohanese designs. We opted for fish-scale, scale-mail that tapered to a point, as a point of difference to the chain of the Uruk-hai and Gondorians, and a color scheme dominated by green and gold."



ROHIRRIM
Maquette
Sacha Lees
"The soldier in this maquette has a maroon cloak featuring embroidery on the hem. I imagined that he cloak had been passed down through generations from his soldier ancestors."

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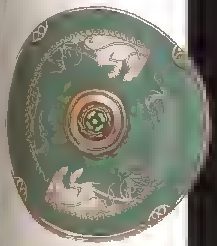
MERRY'S HELMET
Concept
Ben Wootten
"When Merry swears allegiance to Théoden, he wins the old man's heart. It's decided that if he's going to ride to battle with the Rohanrim, he must have armor. And where do you get armor that size? We decided it's Théoden's armor from when he was a child. So, somewhere in the Golden Hall, on a little stand, there's going to be the armor that Théoden wore when he was eight, and this helmet is part of that. It's decorated with horse motifs, and it has an overlay of leather, brass and copper on a steel base. It's very ornate and very beautiful — and it's really cute."



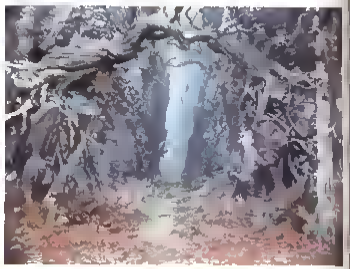
MERRY'S SHIELD
Concept
Daniel Falconer
"We rationalized that Merry's shield was Théoden's from his boyhood. As such, it was designed concurrently with the king's shield. Ian came up with a white horse design that I then incorporated into a simple round shield to be drawn, borrowing thickness design from Théoden's adult shield for consistency and to suggest heritage."

ROHAN WARRIOR
Maquette
Ben Wootten
"I think there were just five Rohan maquettes done: I did one, Daniel did a couple and Warren and Sacha did one each. And Peter Hood there all and that was it: decided. We went on to do life-size sculpts of the helmets, and the armor began to be made. So after a very short drawing stage and a very short maquette stage, we were making them. Sometimes we hit the rock immediately."

Scanned by Bvana

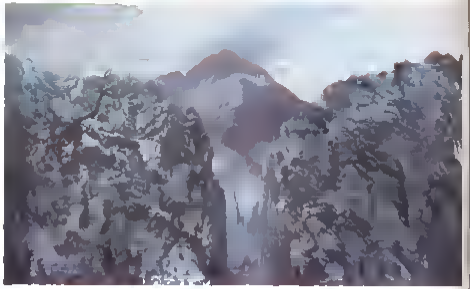
PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The track that leads from the plateau at Dunharrow to the Paths of the Dead goes through a ravine, and Peter had shot some location footage in the Pinnacles, a remarkable area of weirdly eroded towers of rock. We tried to capture something of that look in the sets we built. Peter also wanted some gloomy and deformed-looking trees and Brian Mainey was more than happy to oblige. This drawing is of the area immediately in front of the entrance to the Paths of the Dead themselves."

PATHS OF THE DEAD
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the Hirdalt Slot, the passage to the Paths of the Dead located on the top of the Dunharrow plateau. The painting was redone for Peter, as he thought we needed to see the path receding away from us into the glen."

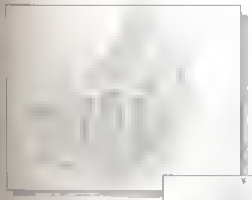


◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"A point-of-view shot where Aragorn looks down the sinister passageway. Peter wanted the interior to look like the Pinnacles, where he filmed the monkey sequence for his early movie, *Braindead*. The live plate shows the arbor and salt; the blue camp-fire smoke presented problems for the painting. The matte painting will replace the green screen and the cliffs will be extended upwards.

◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"This was for the start of a 360-degree shot, where Aragorn walks up to the narrow passageway leading east Mount Dwimorberg, [illegible] seen in the distance. Peter's brief for this was that it [illegible] 'Skulls have been discretely worked into the [illegible] the cliff face, the fruit of which is an extension [illegible] this angle we are looking up.



◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Inside the passage we become aware that we are in catacombs, with the tombs of ancient warriors laid out amongst their grave-goods in niches cut into the walls, and the figure that Tolkien refers to — and in the act of struggling to enter a tomb, or escape some unknown fate — can be seen to one side."



◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
John Howe
"Intended to be the first of several gates, reminiscent of the seven gates of Gondolin, not sacked of leading to a luminous jewel of a city, leading deep into the heart of the dead lands under the mountain."

◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This drawing was for a detail of the set which would ease the difficulties of shooting in a tunnel, and allow for a shot looking across the remains of an anonymous ancient warrior.

◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is the gateway to the Paths of the Dead. Skulls are piled up between the slabs of rock and the sides of the ravine as well as in the niches in the door columns. This theme will be adapted as a subsequent scenario. We wanted some kind of sculpture on the lintel above the doorway and partly because I was unsure what language to use, and partly because I like the idea that Middle-earth has some areas of its history that no one has thoroughly explored, I devised a few, vaguely prehistoric looking pictographs that looked ominous and characteristic."

◇ PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
John Howe
"Was to make a door look forbidding without resorting to silly conventions like great skulls carved in the lintel — but a door nevertheless, that clearly says 'enter at your own risk.'"

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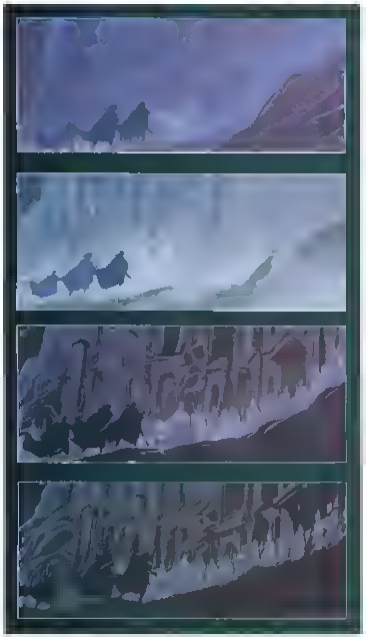

PATHS OF THE DEAD
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"This is connected to the large picture of the start of this section. Alan Lee had done a lot of design work showing how the city would look. It's an environment where, were you to just walk in there and glance around, you would just see the large cave-like rocky environment. But when the Army of the Dead appear, so does their city — those structures that were once rocks suddenly blur then refocus and you start seeing these large, austere, lonely old structures emerge from the rock. The pictures, therefore are of the "before" rocks. We wanted to make them look as natural as possible, but introduce vertical, more formal shapes off in the distance that we could then use to our advantage. I did overlays on top of these a while ago now, just playing with different shapes and referencing images.

"The greens of the main picture are unusual colors for this film — traditionally, there are lots of darker tones throughout the movie, and as a contrast, a lot of white but only in specific places.

"These smaller paintings were done for Mark Stetson, the original Visual Effects Consultant, some time ago. We were looking at the differing color palette and also looking at the type of structures that might appear the question being, what proportion of the rock will stay rock and what will become the city?"

PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
John Howe
"The central column of the amphitheater about the army appears. At one point Peter wanted to see an underground city."

CITY OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, on their route through the mountain, enter a huge open space which has there more formal architectural elements, as well as a concentration of the catacomb-like rock tombs. Then, as the King of the Shire and his army emerge, we realize that there is what a ghost city clinging to the sides of the cavern and the chasm that runs through it."

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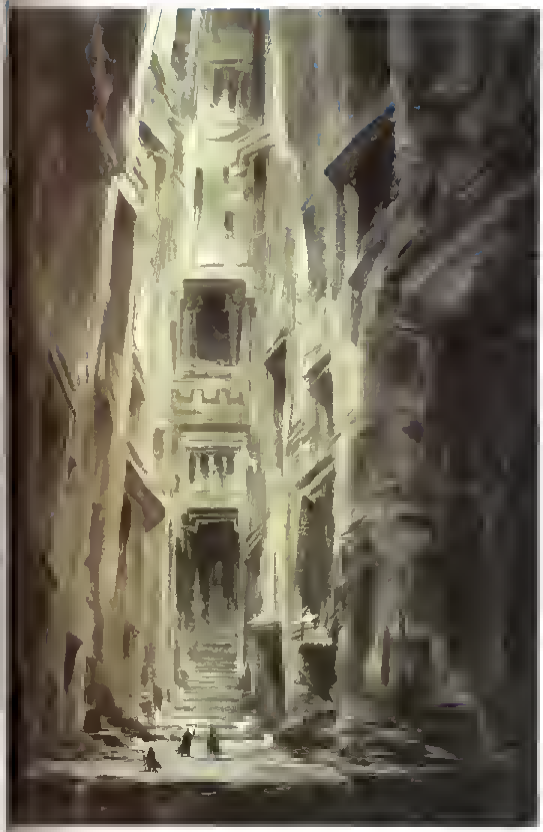

CITY OF THE DEAD
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is a lighting study to show how the City of the Dead might look to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli as they see it appear out of the rock."

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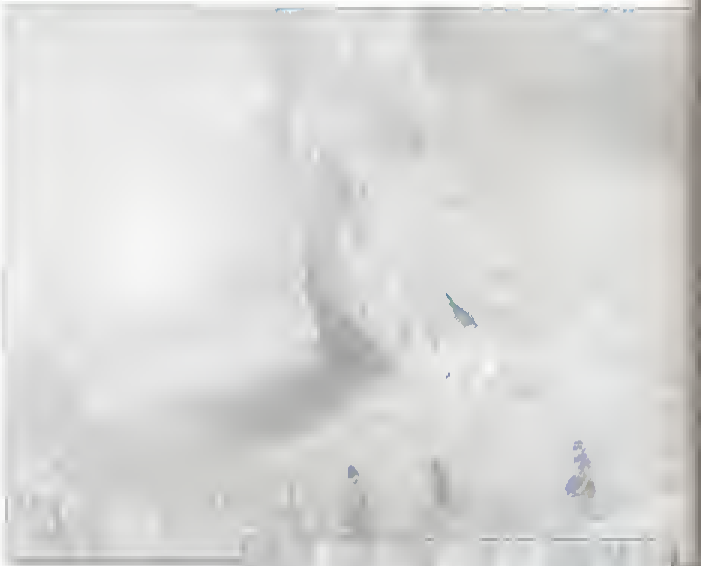
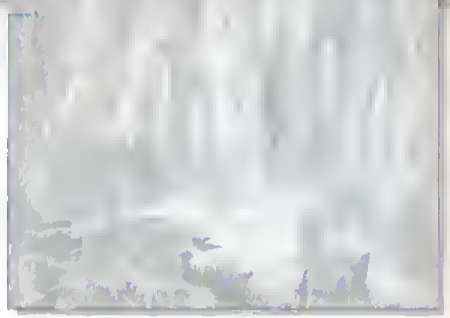
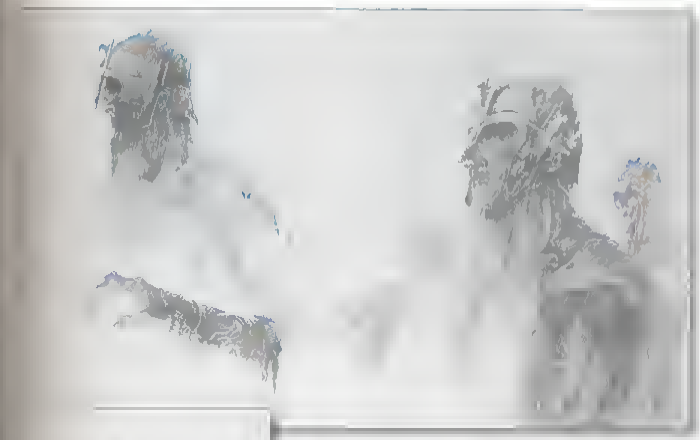
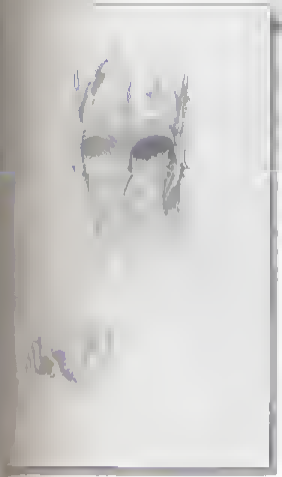


PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
John Howe
"The arrival of the Army of the Dead. Huge amphitheater with a central column. The army comes out of passageways and slowly ooze down the paths to the floor of the sewers. I wanted it to seem like being the center of a slow-motion whirlpool, as disorienting as possible."



PATHS OF THE DEAD
Sketch
[illegible]
"[illegible] run for the City of the Dead, and the scene of our [illegible] with the King of the Dead."





KING OF THE DEAD
Sketch
Alan Lee
"In these sketches I was thinking about the King of the Dead's helmet and the general look of him. One idea we and was that we could have the helmet partly rotted away and we could show something of the inside of his face as the flesh had rotted in the same place. Although the King of the Dead was an actor in a prosthetic he had digital helmet and a digital rotting skull, and we'll be seeing both at once; sometimes the skull will be more prominent and at other times the actor's prosthetic exterior will be, depending on how angry he is at any given moment."

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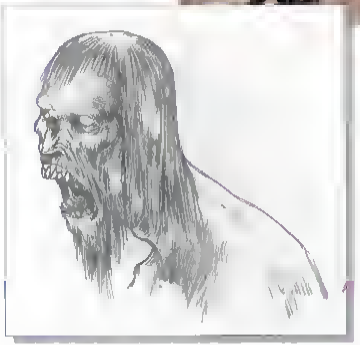
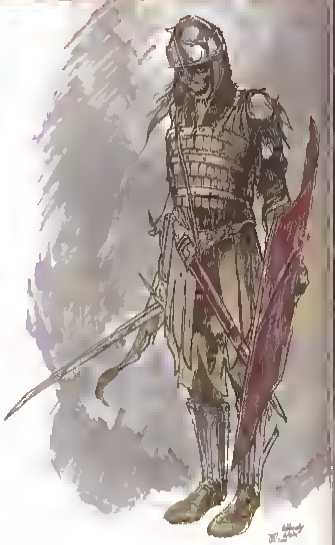
ARMY OF THE DEAD
Maquettes
Mike Asquith
This is a set of maquettes or which Mike tried to create as much variety as possible as if they're come from all walks of life. According to Ron Weatherton, these were very early ideas, trying to set the tone as the Weta team began thinking about the sequence in the third film. They date from 1996 or early 1997 and, as Ron explains, "I hope Mike won't mind that these are in the book — I think they should be there because they tell the very start of the Weta story."





ARMY OF THE DEAD
Concept drawing
Warren Mahy
"I took Tolkien literally at his word here, drawing a phantom or zombie-like creature. This was done during the early stages of preparation for the sequence, and Peter was really just saying to us, 'Think dead.

"I like the idea that, potentially, they still and a roughness to them, and they looked as if they used to be strong men with strong morals. I went for an accentuated long neck, with the time they have spent in the void, they have probably been pulled and yanked around a lot, and I think that adds to the corpselike feel of them."

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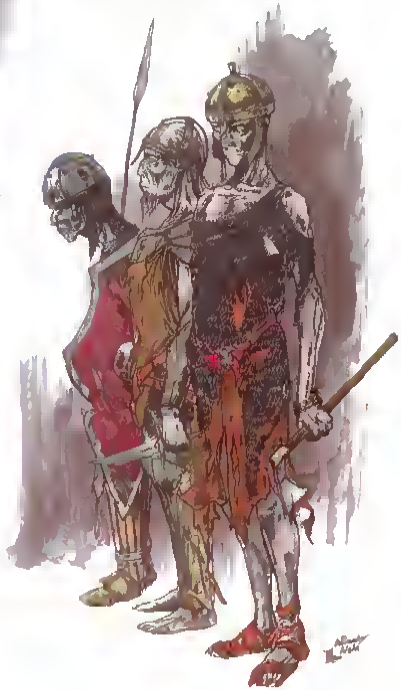
ARMY OF THE DEAD
Concept drawings
Warren Mahy
"We wanted a different look for this army, different from Gondor, different from the Easterlings, different from Rohan, and I remember that them very difficult. In the end I think we started heading a little more toward the Eastern side of things, especially for the shapes of the helmets, which you measure in the one opposite below. We wanted open-faced helmets so you get an impression of the zombie like face and all those things that are hanging off the helmet.

"Having gone to all four corners of the globe for the various armies of Middle-earth, it was becoming difficult not to be repetitive. That said, these guys were a little easier in the sense that they looked broken-down, and probably are going to be bleached out a lot, maybe they'll be looking fairly transparent, so it's really trying to the a silhouette in shape that makes a really striking impression. We felt that they needed to look uniform within themselves, but not as much as the Gondorians, perhaps were like the Rohan, where there's a range of different helmets and different headpieces, but all fitting within the same cultural identity."



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ARMY OF THE DEAD
Maquettes
Mike Asgaith
These were early sketch of the Army of the Dead, just to try to get a feel for how troublesome they would look. The lower two to the right started life as maquettes for possible faces of the Ringwraiths, seen when Frodo puts on the Ring at Weatherton. They were not used then but were later recognised as the Army of the Dead. The larger picture shows an early concept for the King of the Dead. The artists sometimes felt that they could reuse something not used previously to give an initial guide to Peter, to discover whether or not they were on the right track.

ARMY OF THE DEAD
Digital artwork
Alan Lee
"Peter mentioned quite casually, that it would be good to see the occasional horseman amongst our dead warriors, so I produced this. There was some talk about simple ways of representing this effect in what may only be a fleeting shot, but the ever-optimistic Matt Aitken at Weta Digital was confident that it would be easier than it looked to model as a CG creature, and so we went ahead with it."

ARMY OF THE DEAD
Shield concept
Daniel Falconer
"All sorts of options were explored for every army we designed. In the early design phases, anything was up for grabs, as in this case before we had a strong lead for the Army of the Dead. I tried a rather Gothic design, with elaborate cast furniture. Ultimately this was not the path we took."

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KING OF THE DEAD
CGI face concept
Gino Acevedo
"This was the second stage of the King of the Dead CGI work, and it was for a scene where you see the King during his transformation. Of course, there's also a prosthetic mask on the actual actor – there's going to be a lance in mist that flows over his face and what happens is that as the mist covers him you start to see the deterioration, and begin to see the skull beneath his skin and a lot gory detail."

ARMY OF THE DEAD
Armor concepts
Daniel Falconer
"These Army of the Dead concepts were done in the hope of establishing some iconic shapes for them, as much the same way as had been done for the other armies of Middle-earth. I thought strong vertical lines were something we hadn't seen before in our other armies, so I incorporated these lines in the soldier on the right.

"Exploration was done to determine just how aged and decayed the clothing and armor of the dead army would be. It was unclear initially how much money we would have to spend on these guys, so I tried to find ways to reuse Gondorian armor, repainted, heavily aged and covered with cloth beyond recognition in some of the early drawings such as this one to the left."

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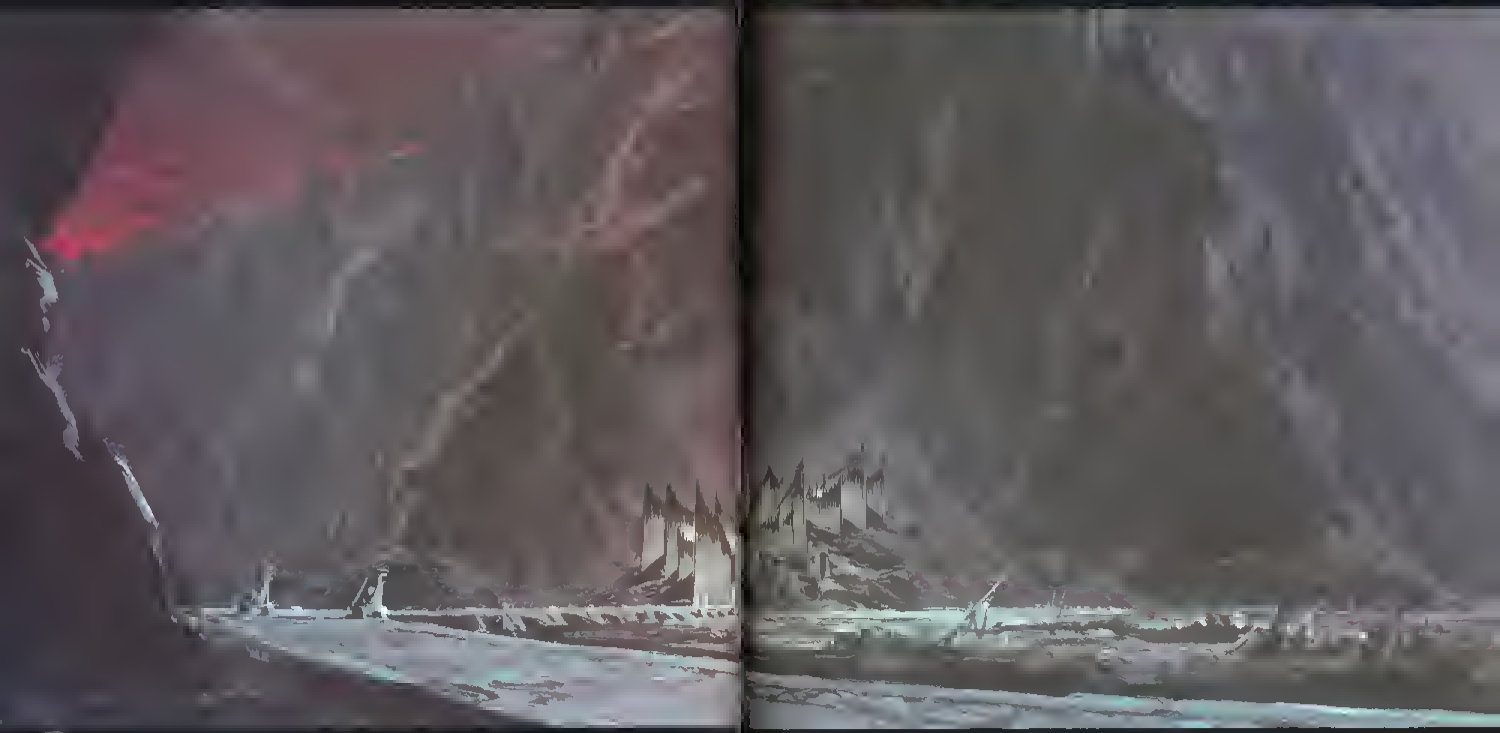
MINAS MORGUL



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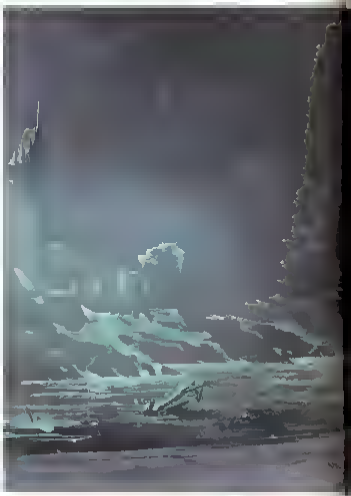
MINAS MORGUL
Environment study
Jeremy Bennett
"This painting was of help to those working on the environment, as the same that it put Minas Morgul and the Morgul Vale in perspective. Minas Morgul itself is a huge structure, but it is literally dwarfed when compared to the Morgul Vale. I painted it with a deliberate fisheye-lens look so we can see as much of the environment as possible. The resulting scenes in the film match John Howe's original conception perfectly. A great result."

MINAS MORGUL
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"A study of the road leading to Minas Morgul, intended to show the environment and the types of structures you might see in the rocks. The city is out of shot on the left, with only its greenish glow visible, and the sickly river and swamp in front of it. We should imagine Frodo, Sam and Gollum are in the foreground, just out of frame, and we're looking back down the valley, out the way they came in and toward the Pelennor Fields. In this sequence, the road is obscured by a massive army of Orcs and Trolls leaving Minas Morgul on their way to Osgiliath.

"The next picture opposite is a study of the gate, and the amount of glow that you might see emanating from the interior of Minas Morgul, after the gates have just opened and the Orcs are heading out over the bridge."



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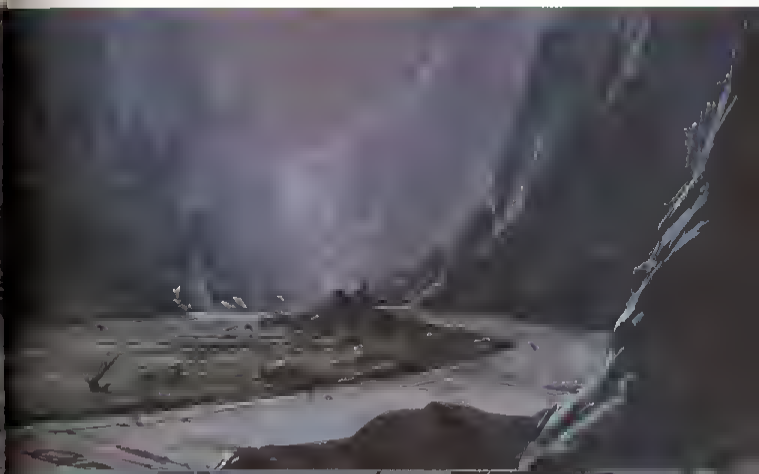

MINAS MORGUL
Digital matte painting
Sean Cole
"Opposite is a painting of the Morgul Vale, as seen from the entrance to Minas Morgul, and next to it is the rough composite of the actors and miniature with the painting laid in behind them. This is just after the vast Orc army has left the building."

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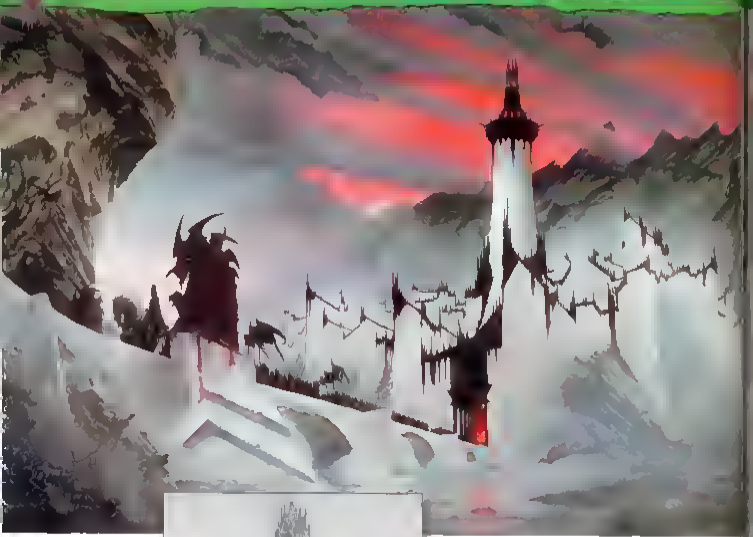
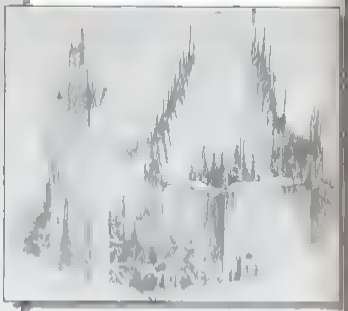


MINAS MORGUL
Watercolor
John Howe
"The Witch-king and his army sweeping forth from Minas Morgul. This early painting was done before it was decided to upgrade his mount from a horse to a full beast."



MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
John Howe
"[illegible] of the Moon, with [illegible] the full beasts [illegible] atop it."

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MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
Lia Lee
"John had done some beautiful drawings of Minas Morgul, but he'd left by the time we were actually starting to build the miniatures, so I followed a lot of his designs and did the detailing on the miniature. So this one is basically me interpreting John and finishing it off the way he would have, if he'd been around to do so."

MINAS MORGUL
Color concept
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the lessons firing off vertically, out of the top of the tower, communicating with Barad-dûr — the Witch-king having a chat with Sauron, perhaps. This study was just a look at the beam itself and the effect it's having on the sky, as it punches a hole through. It won't be green in the final movie. It's going to have more of a white-hot look to it, with a very subtle green tinge so it's not too fruity."

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MINAS MORGUL
Color concepts
Jeremy Bennett

"Minas Morgul is meant to have had this green glow but where does the glow come from? Does it come from the swamp, color it come from inside the city? In some way has the glow leaked through the wall, leaking down through the rocks into the swamp and affecting it? And what color is that glow? Is it green? You can see in [illegible] painting that it is quite a lovely green, and when these studies were done, some years ago, that seemed to be the way it was heading. The studies color [illegible] were done at the request of Mark Stetson to explore radically different color palettes. I believe the green is obviously the when successful."

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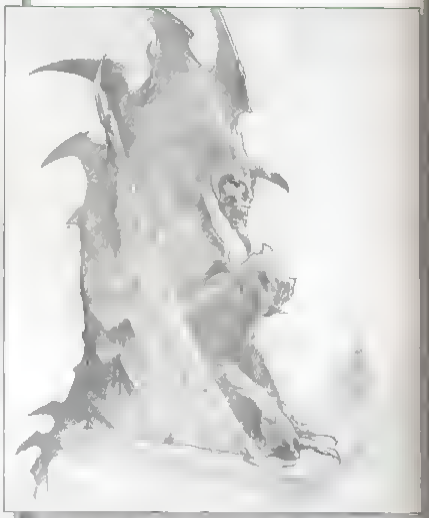
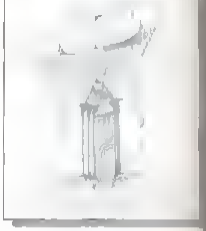
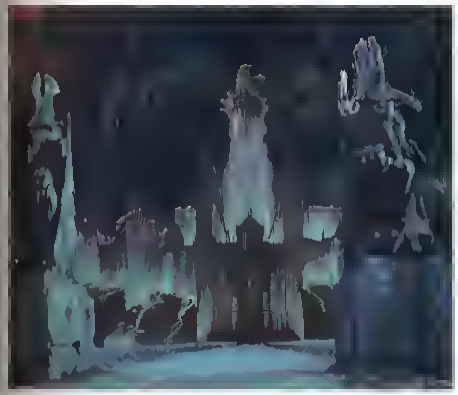


◇ **MINAS MORGUL**
Sketch
John Howe
"A sketch of one of the Morgul statues. I liked the idea that these statues, designed to intimidate and keep enemies away, would be carved in the likeness of the most fearsome creature in all Middle-earth, so I came up with a stylized Balrog. Better than any 'Beware of the Dog' sign. And yes, those are wings."

◇ **MINAS MORGUL**
Sketch
John Howe
"This is an early version of the main gate of Minas Morgul. As it was once the sister city of Minas Tirith, there are still traces of the same architecture, but all of it has been have 'redecorated' by the most recent occupants."



◇ **MINAS MORGUL**
Sketch
John Howe
"I believe that Tolkien's Minas Morgul had steps leading down from the front gate, which, while it did give the opportunity for a rather more stately entrance, was not exactly convenient for armies coming forth."



MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
John Howe
"The triangular piers, or buttresses, of Minas Ithil were constructed to echo the shape of the silhouette of Minas Tirith. All of the 'improvements' made by Sauron's Lieutenant, the Witch-king, are in metal, now rusted and staining the white stone. They have been stamped over the masonry, held on with spikes and rivets, and they bite into the stone. Ever had your wisdom teeth pulled? Generally, when they come out, they are in great shape: strongly rooted, so the dentist practically has to crawl inside your mouth with a great pair of pliers and yank them out. I wanted to convey that terrible sensation of metal stamped down on enamel."

MINAS MORGUL
Digital artwork
Alan Lee
"The guardian statues in the foreground were sculpted by Gary Hurt from John's drawings. I then put in the background. I really wanted to show how the effect of the accumulating energy around the tower before the beam blasts out might look. Masaki Mitobe and Sean Scher at Weta Digital did a great job on the final look of these shots."

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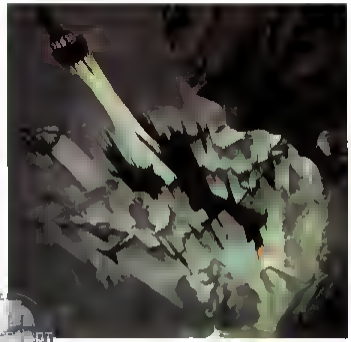
MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
John Howe
"An early version of Minas Morgul, which was closer to the description in Tolkien's text. However, Peter felt it was too far from the Endless Stair."

MINAS MORGUL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"John had done some great drawings of Minas Morgul, upon which the miniature was based, so I did this as a study of the wider environment. Peter wanted the stairs which led up to Cirith Ungol, and Shelob's burrow, to be as vertiginous as possible."



MINAS MORGUL
Watercolors
John Howe
"In this painting, right, I was trying to convey the vertigo that affects anyone wearing the Ring, and the horrible sensation of being exposed that the hobbits have during their climb. The rocks were based on local rock formations to be found around Wellington."

The painting on the left is a reversed version by Paul Lasaine which vividly illustrates the sickly green phosphorescent glow seen in the finished film.

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PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The view from Minas Morgul up a cliff. The camera tilts off that set, which is the blank area at the bottom of the sketch, and looks up at this towering staircase winding its way to the very top of a huge cliff. That in turn leads to Shelob's tunnel, and further adventures."

PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"A sunscape of the whole Minas Morgul valley was built to show like this, where we lift up from a view of the city far below, and look out beyond our heroes, struggling up the stairs, to a view of Minas Tirith in the far distance."

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PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"A more finished, detailed version of the view up the stairs. The statues are actually based on John Howe's designs. If you look at his painting on page 72 you'll see the bridge and these figures sitting on plinths at the foot of it. They were actually built on set, full size, from his plans."

PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Another view of the stairs, this one was based on what was shot on set, and as a guide for the miniature that would be used to extend it."

PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Digital matte painting
Karen de Jong
"This is the view from the Cirith Ungol ledge above Minas Morgul. Additional paintings were done to make the transition between miniature and painting as we lift up from a view of Minas Morgul below to Frodo and Sam's precarious resting place."

PASS OF CIRITH UNGOL
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the last frame of quite an elaborate move. The camera starts on Minas Morgul and lifts up to reveal Minas Tirith in the far distance."

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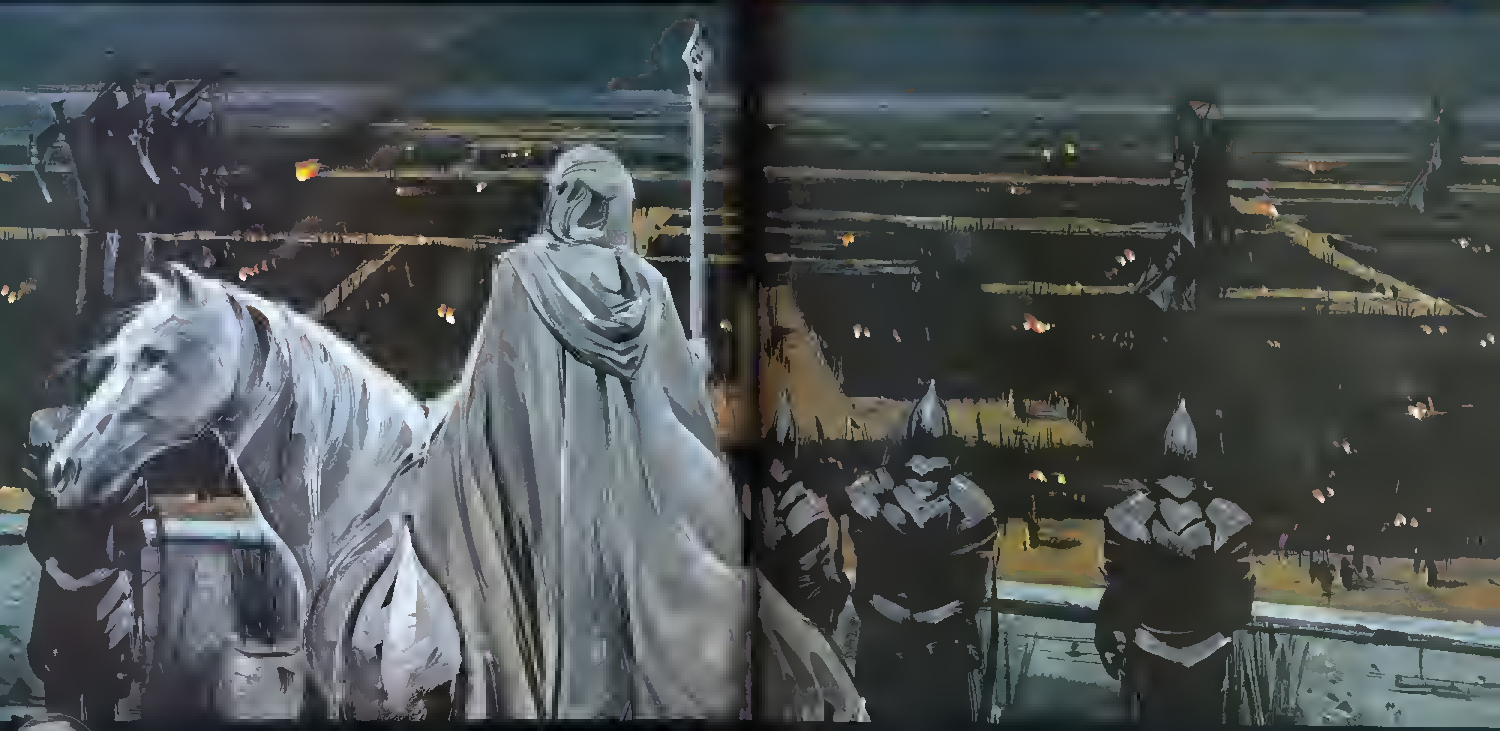
THE SIEGE OF GONDOR



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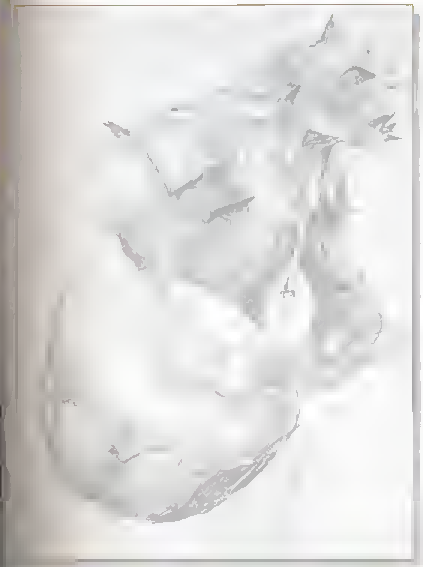
THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the moment when Gandalf rides up on to the parapets as Shadowfax and sees the Ore formations. You've got the siege towers being pushed by four trolls each. There will also be catapults in front of them, but I haven't actually put them into this. I really wanted to introduce as made smoke as possible onto the field of battle, and I think these are large trackers out in the distance, burning. The Ores have terrible rather like the Uruk-hai at Helm's Deep and I've used the smoke from them to imply ghastly silhouettes emerging from the gloom."

THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This army of Sauron marching on Minas Tirith. Featuring great beasts, siege towers and armed trolls and Orcs, this was done to give a feeling of variation in scale and the different types of Mordor adversaries we would see out there. There are also some Mûmakil of the very front, although they don't turn up until the end of the battle, I just wanted to get everything in there really. I even put some Ores on horseback, which I don't think we will see although Tolkien does make reference to horses. He says there were a few horses in the Mordor army, so that gave me licence to put a couple in. I don't think this will happen, but we have got Wargs-riders in there, which will be just as good if not better."



THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is a troll drummer, one of a number of new trolls appearing in the third film. We used the basic cave-troll from *Fellowship of the Ring* and made modifications to him, made him more fierce and warlike. Now, there are several varieties: there are frontline troops and catapult leaders and some drummers as well, and this is one who would have from marching alongside Grond, ahead of a battalion of troops."

THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"In the background, you've got the Rohan arriving on the ridge at dawn, just like the Seventh Cavalry. Again, the siege towers are being wheeled – well, I've got Ores being pulled toward the walls by trolls. I like the smoke masking everything down below. This study is almost three years old. It's interesting now seeing the completed shots, as the look, at times, is not too dissimilar."

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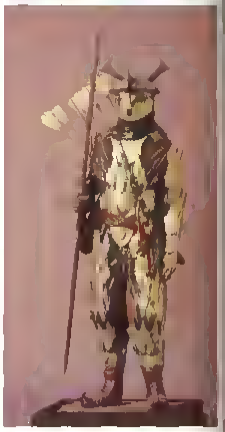

EASTERLINGS AND GONDORIANS
Maquettes
Ben Wootten and Daniel Falconer

"I was so pleased to sculpt these. Daniel took the lead on the Easterling designs, but I was lucky enough to realize the design in 3D. It's a great-looking design. I put my own slight spin on it, which is the fan of the arrows on his back. They didn't have bows in the end, whoever really said. But other than that, I was just lucky to sculpt a great piece of work from someone else's drawing—that's the whole Weta teamwork thing in action.

"The photos on the next page are of the final Gondorian maquette that Daniel did. Our similarity, this is the culmination of many people's work—it's so cool that almost every drawing or design was produced by the team of artists and designers, rather than just one person. The whole project has been fun because of that."

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THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett

"I started off with the smaller one on the left, which was done quite a while ago now. It's the first time we see the Orcs out on the Pelennor, in front of Minas Tirith. This is when Denethor sees Ugluk for the first time, and when we finally realize what's going on. At this stage we didn't know what form the Orcs would take. The large painting was done very quickly when we had a little more direction from Peter. The Orcs at this stage are far more organized and ready for battle. They're not the ill-bred, knuckle-dragging characters you saw in previous battles. These are rather like the Uruk-hai — they're quite well trained. A little taller than previous Orcs, perhaps, and certainly far more frightening. The Battle of Pelennor is a fully choreographed and designed siege of a medieval citadel, and from what I've already seen it makes Helm's Deep look quite puny."

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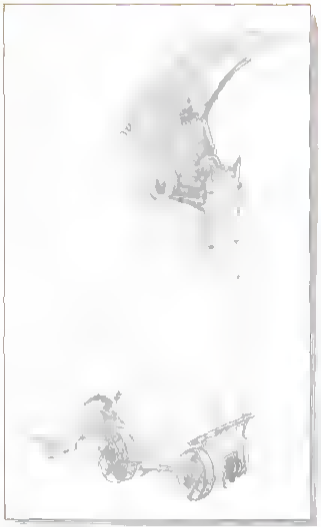

ORC SIEGE TOWER
Sketch
Jon Howe
"My take on one of the Orc siege towers. Once wheeled up against the battlements the two huge claws come crashing down to lock it in place."

ORC SIEGE TOWER
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is an early drawing of a siege tower and catapult. The final siege towers were designed by Warren and Daniel and has a much more angular look."

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ORC SIEGE TOWER
Concept
Warren Mahy
"John Howe came up with the idea that the top of the siege tower drops upon the a drawbridge and hooks onto the wall, and all the Orcs then run off the top of it. The towers are pushed along by rats, but looking at these little figures, I think the scale's a bit out on both of these drawings. They are both really huge. The one on the left has its own little catapult on it, so it can take out the ramparts or take out the Gondorians on the wall as it approaches them. The one below has a little engineer's hole in the bottom, so they can start digging through the wall if they want to.
"So we put the idea that these towers have been pieced together from bits and pieces stolen from other manufacturing cultures, because the Orcs probably wouldn't have that much time to make having wood into such efficient shapes. You'll see that the left-hand drawing has a load of bolts pinned onto spikes — an idea I originally had for the Haradrim, but it seems to work better with the Orcs."

ORC SIEGE TOWER
Concept
Daniel Falconer
"Warren Mahy had done several very successful drawings of Orc siege equipment. This concept above was an analogue of the elements from Warren's earlier drawings, which Peter Jackson had responded well too and was the final approved design."

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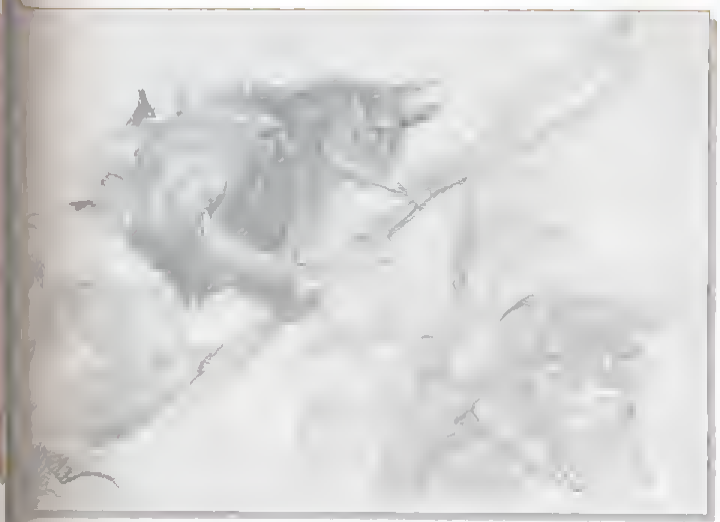
◇ **GREAT BEAST**
Sketch
John Howe
"An early version of the beasts pulling the great ram, Grond, across the Pelennor Fields toward the gates."



◇ **THE SIEGE OF GONDOR**
Sketch
Alan Lee
"There is a design for one of the attack trolls in Sauron's army, a little bit fierce and more awesome, really. Here, any we so want to see. Peter's very determined that we need to make the orcs into a formidable and scary fighting force."

THE SIEGE OF GONDOR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Seems we only have one totally new monster in *The Return of the King*, which is Shelob. I thought there might be an upper body to put something else onto the Pelennor Fields, which could be a bit of a surprise. So I did the drawing, mostly, of the great beast that would be pulling the siege engine and/or Grond across the Fields. Then, just recently, I was looking back over some of John Howe's stuff and realized that he'd created a similar creature [opposite, top] back when he was working on the project, but his had two horns—being horns rather than my rhinosaurus tusk. I think my beast is halfway between a dinosaur and a large goat."

"The sketch was taken by James Beswerick at Weta and rendered into the composite you see to the right."

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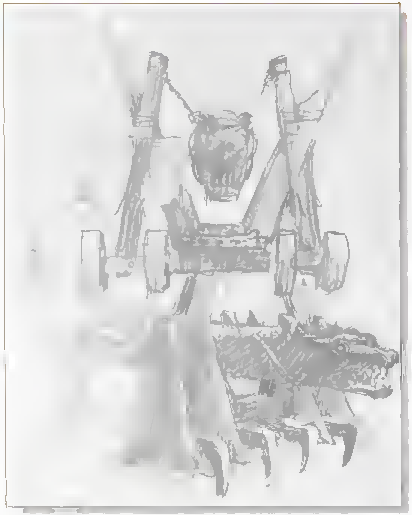
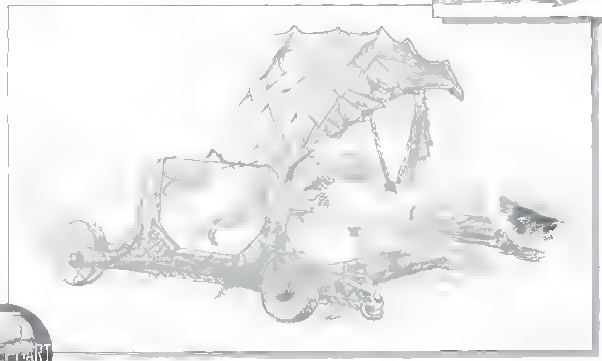


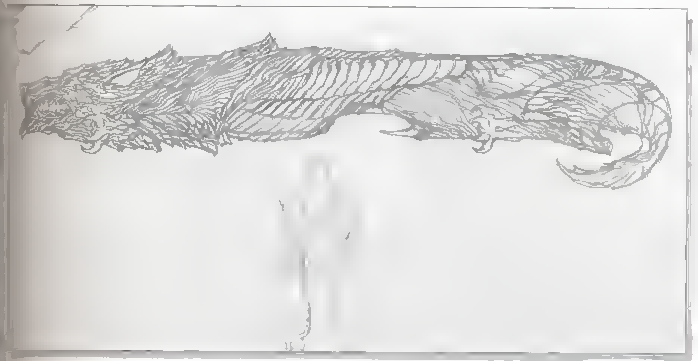
GROND
Sketch
Alan Lee
"One of a number of drawings that I did when we were thinking about Grond, showing a more battering ramlike device. The mountedness of the thing being drawn along would create a forward-and-backward motion in the battering ram itself, suspended as it was from the chains in the cradle. The mountedness would help to pull it along and then the claws at the front would grab the ground and prevent it from slipping back, so it's almost moving itself along, grasping the ground with these huge mechanical claws."



GROND
Sketches
John Howe
"Two early versions of Grond. The wolf's nose as to be filled with burning coals and fire could it would be red-hot."

GROND
Sketches
Dylan Rivers
"In my notes on the first Grond design that I did, it is more of a conventional battering ram, with interlocking iron pieces and a very abstract wolf's head at the top. This was done quite some time after we'd begun making the films, so the influence of John Howe and Alan Lee are very prevalent. There are a lot of the ideas that John had established as signifying Mordor: multiple scalloped pieces of metal and sharp spikes, and many layers of metal over one another. You see these ideas as much of the stuff John and Alan did — the Black Gates, the Witch-king armour, much of Barad-dûr — and all have multiple sharp curves overlaid and sharp, spiney-looking pieces of metal. So I tried to incorporate all this so that Grond had a distinctly Mordor look. However, I think Peter felt it was the normal, just a battering ram. He wanted Grond to have a different flavor to it.

"Work began on the heavier one — hundreds and hundreds of plates of metal giving it a far more sculptural feel. Instead of being a battering ram with a wolf's head, this a much more evocative of the shape of a crouched wolf: the tail curled round the back and the legs kept low. The legs obviously would be what the brute would hold to swing it. Warren Mahy actually designed the finished one, which is like a sculptural wolf as well, but he ended up designing it in be a lot some solid and that the long the coals pictured here."



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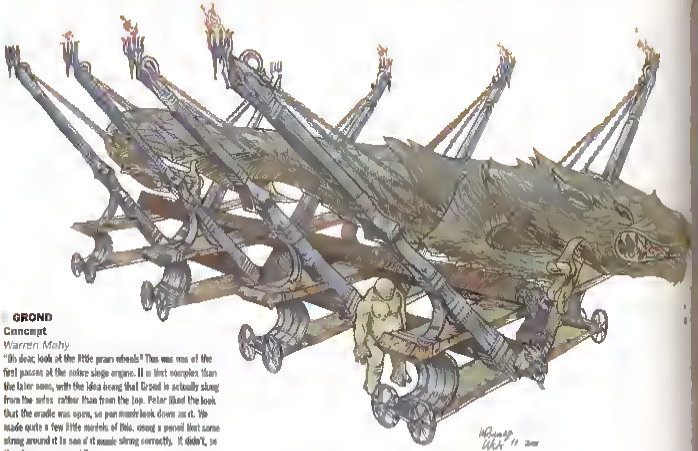
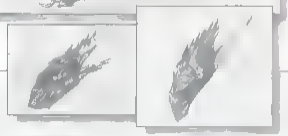


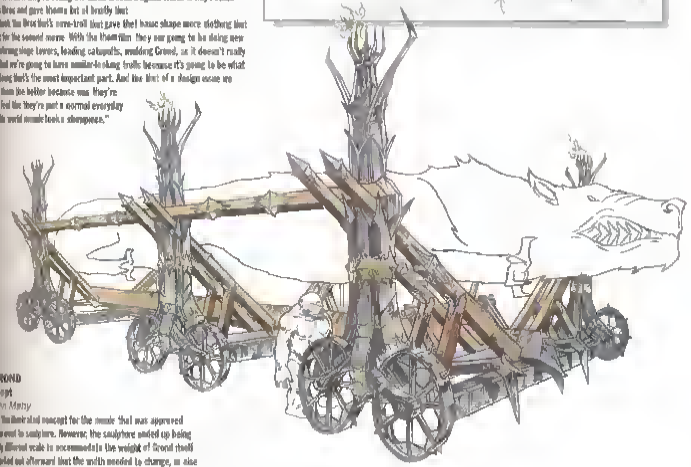
GROND
Concept
Warren Mahy
"Oh dear, look at the little green wheels! That was one of the first passes at the entire siege engine. It is just complex than the later one, with the idea being that Grond is actually slung from the axles rather than from the top. Peter liked the look that the cradle was open, so you could look down on it. We made quite a few little models of this, using a pencil that came along around it to see if it would sling correctly. It didn't, so the idea was scrapped."



GROND
Sketches
Warren Mahy
"Very early passes at Grond's wolf head, which is an idea from the book. Tolkien actually described it pretty thoroughly. I threw it as a distant image in the Warg — it was such a strange shape, though. With the two below left, I was trying to get more of a wedge shape or point, to get the muzzle to cut an through it was a hard-hitting surface that that it would be able to take blows. Whereas, with the one above left, the idea of its nose would work, while the rest would be a bit fragile. At the stage, the concept was solely a wolf's head as the idea of a battering ram, not it developed into the ram using the form of a complete troll as you can see in the larger sketch. This, I think, was one of the first attempts, the idea being that the metalwork is built around the battering ram. So, it's reinforced and strengthened by the armor, adding to the weight that putting extra force with it."

GROND TROLLS
Concept
Tristan Vaers
"We've obviously seen trolls before — the cave-troll in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the mountain-troll guarding the Black Gates scene in *The Two Towers*. Some time and some designs where he'd given them down-facing horns, which I had, so while I was playing around with concepts for the trolls that turn up at the Pelennor Fields I gave them stuff like curlicue bristle lines down the back that remembering John's ideas, some weird tusklike protrusions that grow out of the face I worked to force the sculptors of the faces that make them look just a bit more gnarly and time-ancient. We designed some helmets with big blades that metal shatterer evoking horns rather than actually giving them horns. I was trying to give them more of a barbed feel, curving the tusks out like a hook. It's hard one programing the trolls over the three films, but the trick is coming up with something new that doesn't require a lot of work yet isn't going to make the audience feel as if they're seeing the same creature again. Which is why I stuck long on Grog and gave Shagrat lot of brutality that

"We took the Great Uruk's cave-troll that gave that house shape more clothing that I think for the second movie. With the Uruk-Hai they are going to be doing new things: storming siege towers, loading catapults, wielding Grond, so it doesn't really matter that we're going to have similar-looking trolls because it's going to be what they're doing that's the most important part. And the first of a design course we made of them the better because was they're going to feel like they're just a normal everyday part of the world so we look a stereotype."



GROND
Concept
Jeremy Mahy
"This is the third concept for the movie that was approved and turned to sculpture. However, the sculpture ended up being a slightly different scale to accommodate the weight of Grond itself as pointed out afterward that the width needed to change, so also the wheels couldn't be able to cope with the weight. Often changes from the scale of the trolls, the because of a walkway along the top of the beam that the Orcs run up that down on, that is not in the trolls position, it's just the Great Beasts pulling it.

"We couldn't agree what that Grond that back recently built in Orcs or whether it had been in storage for thousands of years and just brought out of mothballs. I like the idea that it was created long long ago and that there was a sophistication to the sculpture, more than the Pelennor Orcs could have achieved. Maybe they that opened tric and poisons over time, but the actual structure itself can have Morgoth's time, way back in the First Age, a time when the massive, ultimate siege machine would just about have caused the gates to open through fear — the people would have just freaked out and ran away!"

SIEGE OF GONDOR
Cutaways
Jeremy Bennett
"This is pretty old now, one of the first things we did. Grond is accurate as is Minas Tirith in the background, because they'd been made by the time I painted this. I just went and sat with a pen that paper for fifteen minutes and roughly drew what they that built, in the right positions. So I was working off finished maquettes, which was great, if very unusual. But because the footage that already took shot, I that's pretty good idea as to what the Orcs in the Pelennor would be wearing that so on. Certainly for an image like this, it makes life a lot easier. The mountain-trolls, however, are now fully armored. I didn't know back then what they would look like, how they'd be dressed — no one did. All we knew was that they'd be a lot bigger than the cave-troll from Fellowship. There will be three trolls on ramic side, and Grond will was also be pulled by the Great Beasts at the front — a moment that also occurred after this was painted, so I had no idea that was going to happen. But that's one of the great things about all this — they look at your paintings and it inspires them to do even more. Look at those big wheels, you get a real sense of power — you can kill half your enemy just by running them over. In the film I think you actually see Orcs getting in the way, pushing one another out of the way but still getting squashed.

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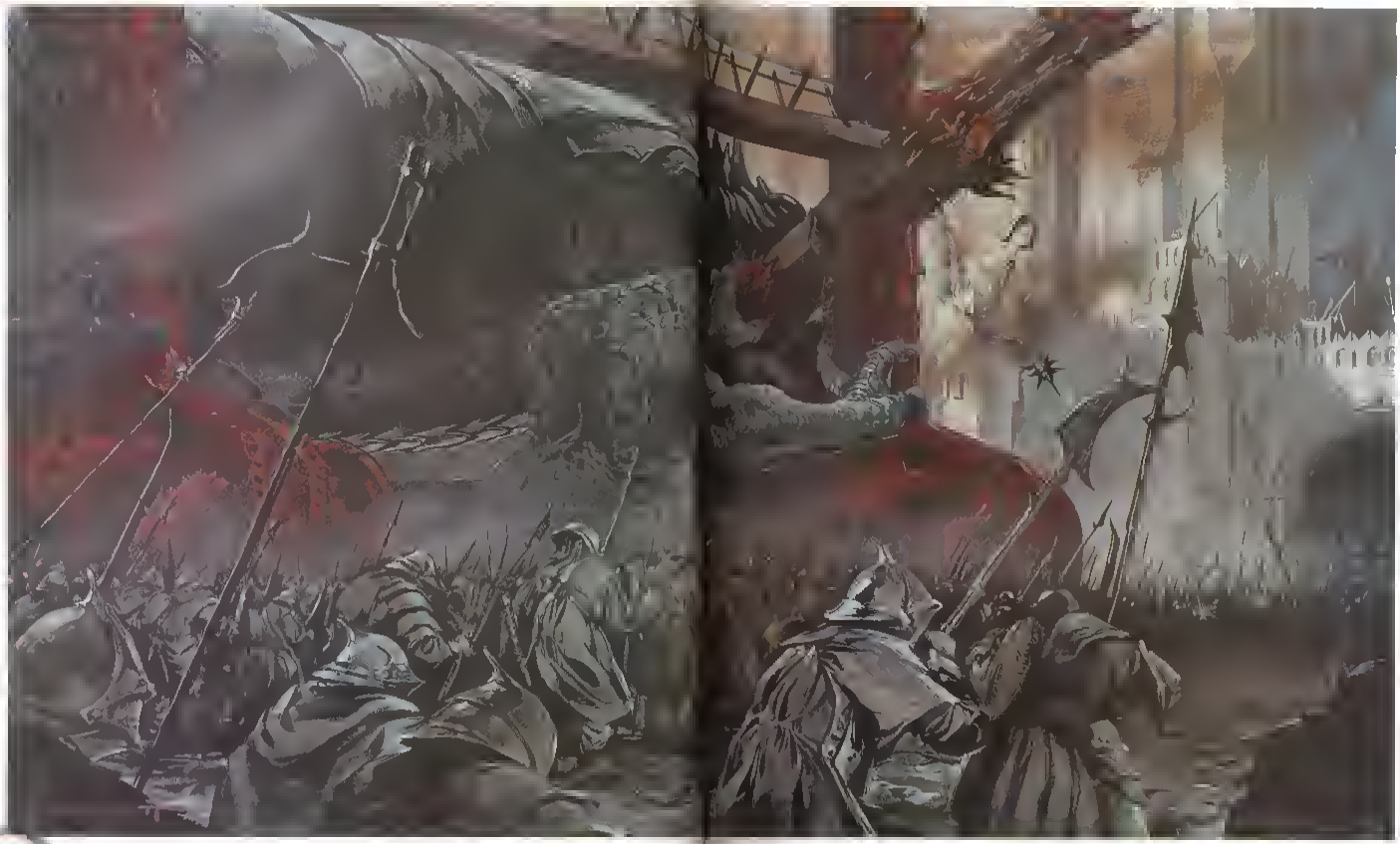

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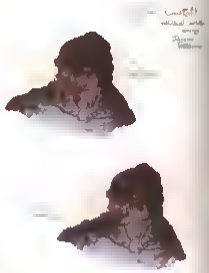
MOUNTAIN-TROLL
Concept
Ben Wootten
"We were looking at modifying the trolls slightly from the time we saw in the first two films to make them bigger and uglier. So this is a Photoshop job based on a photo of the original cave troll sculpture. What I've done is remodel the face in Photoshop, making it more angular, harder and more dangerous. The eyes are smaller, slightly slanted, and he's got bigger teeth, while the bone structure through the face and the cheekbones and the brow is a lot more severe. I've also darkened him so he looks more rock-like, more like Tolkien's description in the book."

MOUNTAIN-TROLL
CGI face concept
Gino Acevedo
"This is adapted from a sculpture by Jamie Beamish, and was a color exercise coming up with different paint schemes, and also adding things such as stubble and the scars that our face all over his face. In the film Uruk-hai are going to be seventy of them, so they all have to look a little different. We wanted some subtle of battle wounds and others with variations of color and skin texture."

MOUNTAIN-TROLL
Color concepts
Dan el Falconer
"Because the trolls would appear in very dark scenes there was the danger that having them too dark would make them hard to see onscreen. I played around with adding some color to films them to help pull them out of the background. I and originally this to be a kind of natural camouflage, such as man- but it would also work equally well on our paint."

MOUNTAIN-TROLL
Armor concepts
Dan el Falconer
"During the latter stages of making the film, it was decided to introduce a new species of troll in the battle scenes. We did a number of drawings and Photoshop designs to explore possible new armor and weapon styles for these new trolls. Taking our lead from Tolkien once again we decided that they might be the Olog-hai, a species that sat somewhere between the trolls and the Uruk-hai."



MOUNTAIN-TROLL
Face concepts
Dan el Falconer
"Rather than have all our trolls look alike I explored the possibilities of some level of variation among individuals. Thus included diseases and deformity variants, bung eyes and the like."

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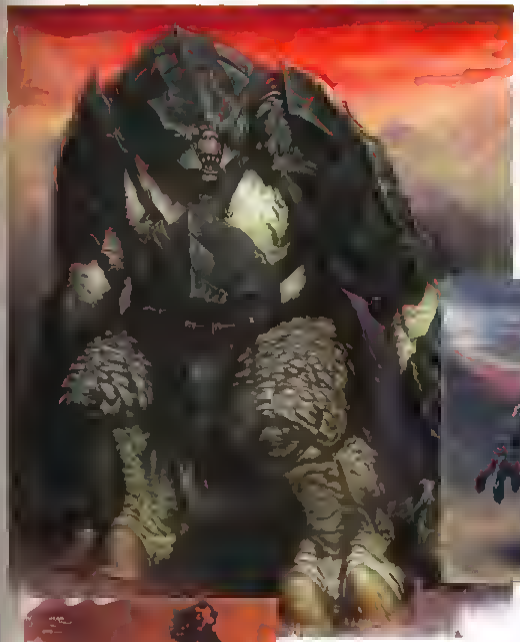
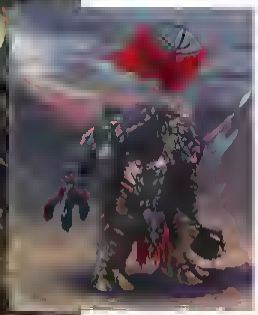
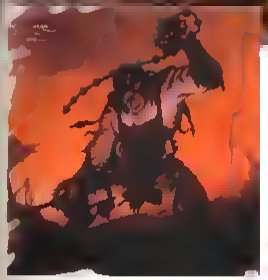


OLOG-HAI
Concepts
Ben Wootten
"These were very obviously drawn recently, using digital coloring. Although I drew both of those, I colored the one below and a new member of the design team, Greg Broadmore, colored the large one due to the dreaded deadline. It was great to go back and revisit some of our earlier design concepts with a fresher and maybe a slightly more educated mind."





OLOG-HAI
Helmet concept
Dan el Falconer
"A variety of different helmet designs were done for the Olog-hai look. I was consensus that we needed to create something that didn't resemble Uruk-hai or Orc helmets, such as those we had already seen in the first two films. So I tried some different approaches, using more chaos, or overlapping scale-shaped plates, more like Sauron's Second Age armor seen in the prologue to the first film."

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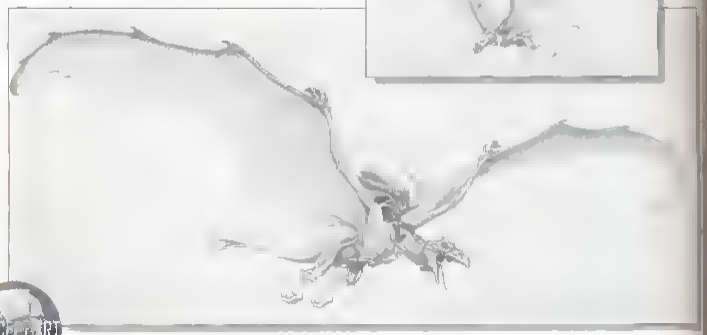
FELL BEAST
Concepts
Shaun Bolton

"I come from a stop-motion background so I've a big interest in dinosaurs, and you may see that here in these guys. In this version of the fell beast I was trying for something that wasn't a dragon, but not a bird either. I don't think any of us really explored the idea of a feathered fell beast. We were trying for something unmounted because those creatures wasn't not treated. The particular version was to look at what it's on the ground, how it might walk around, with the bridle, of course, to the rider.

"Below, are slightly rearranged fell beasts in flight. Again, I was exploring different ideas, trying to be more elaborate with the wings – and coming up with something different from what had been seen in movies previously. I thought that, with it being a flying creature it might have a rudderlike tail. Again, perhaps that's a dinosaur thing. The tiny one is too dinosaur-like for other ones, and more vulture. This came totally out of the blue really, but I think it was a response to Peter's request for something that should look repellent."



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FELL BEAST
Concepts
Daniel Falconer

"The winged mounts of the Nazgûl were only scantily described in the books, leaving us with quite a bit of latitude when coming up with designs to show Peter. The top drawing was perhaps the most dragonlike that we done. Yet there is something noble about dragons that didn't quite fit. Peter felt they needed to look more repulsive and evil.

"Among the wildest concepts for the Wraths' mounts was the middle sketch, based on a giant, armed fruit bat. The animal was a blend of bat and armadillo with a large and powerful neck for swooping on large prey on the wing.

"The concept art, right, was based with carrion birds such as vultures and marabou storks in mind, a companion drawing to the one on page 101."

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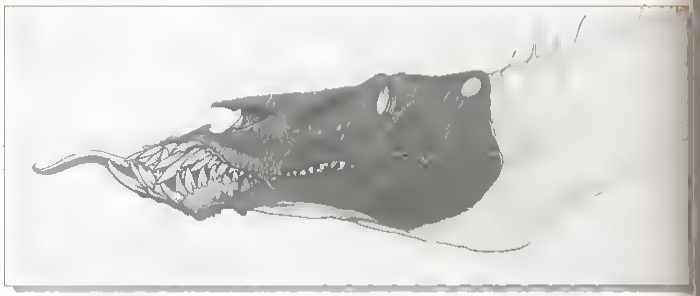

FELL BEAST
Concept & maquette
Jan e Beswarick
We ideas exploring the head of the Witch-king's fell beast, particularly its face-plate and bridle.

FELL BEAST
Concept
Ione Falconer
"Trying to give Peter a truly repulsive beast, I drew this fell beast concept with the inspiration of whose motion static and other carrion-eating species in mind. The creature was almost rabbit in frame, but huge and loathsome. I imagined it would munchas foul as it looked, swooping in over the battle field."

FELL BEAST
Concept
Gordon Rivers
"The fell beast design had probably the shortest design process of all the films' creatures. Peter had always been a big fan of John Howe's fell beast design, so obviously, as we had that as a very solid foundation, we just needed to extrapolate from it. But with the exception of John coming out and making a few first breaks to it alongside the designers at Weta, and the head being designed by Ian Research (whose sketch and maquettes appear opposite), it was pretty much a given that the fell beast was going to look like.

"For the sketch I was trying to extrapolate from all Ian's ideas and produce a design for the Witch-king's mount, to make him look meaner and meaner than all the others. So I made the spines on the fin that much larger and more gnarled and gave him this huge salmon-like hook jaw, which gave him a much more brutal look — making something that already looked nasty and fierce look even more nasty and ferocious. However, in a way, I've come across as too normal and a little bit too mellow of a fish.

"The helmet was based on a John Howe design, John had always drawn the fell beast with ears on, and I think I was just trying to show the long, gnarled ears, very similar to John's design, but with the hook jaw underneath it, and give it a big fin and spike at the front."

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FELL BEAST
Maquettes
Shen n Bolton
"These fell beast designs are based on my drawings, keeping that dinosaur look. By this stage, I was managing it resembling more of a pterodactyl, in terms of its proportions at least. I like working in three dimensions, it's actually a good way to do design as you can sometimes do a sculpture more quickly than you can a drawing. However, drawing in pencil can be equally satisfying, and it's probably quicker to do a lot of detail in pencil as opposed to sculpting a maquette!"

FELL BEAST
Maquettes
Ben Wootten & Jamie Beswarick
Two other members of the Weta team sculpted their own fell beasts: Ben's can be seen on the left and Jamie's above.

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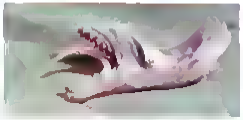
◊ FELL BEAST
CGI face concept
Gino Acevedo
"The image of the top is adapted from the sculpture below it by Jamie Beswarick. It was a Photoshop exercise in trying to get the look of a snakeskin, an indigo snake in fact. Basically, this was just one of a number of color schemes to put in front of Peter Jackson to approve and, indeed, he approved this one."



◇ FELL BEAST
Maquettes
Jamie Beswarick
Some further examples of the approved sculpts that Jamie produced: the two above demonstrating the movement of the fell beast's jaw and extent of its tongue...

FELL BEAST
Maquette
Mike Asquith
The size of the fell beast was a sculpt done at a large scale for scanning, so that the fell artists could get the textures and colors right for the digital model. Gino Acevedo painted it up while demonstrating a technique with plaster of Paris – a cast of the sculpt done in plaster of Paris can be coated up to produce the very hard, crisp looking that you get in the actual claws itself

◊◊ GANDALF FACES THE WITCH-KING
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"Once again this is a very old painting done from a storyboard frame. Being produced artwork, the Minas Tirith environment is very different to the finished shot. However, the look behind the fell beast was carried through to the finished shot. The resulting scene is the movie is a personal highlight."

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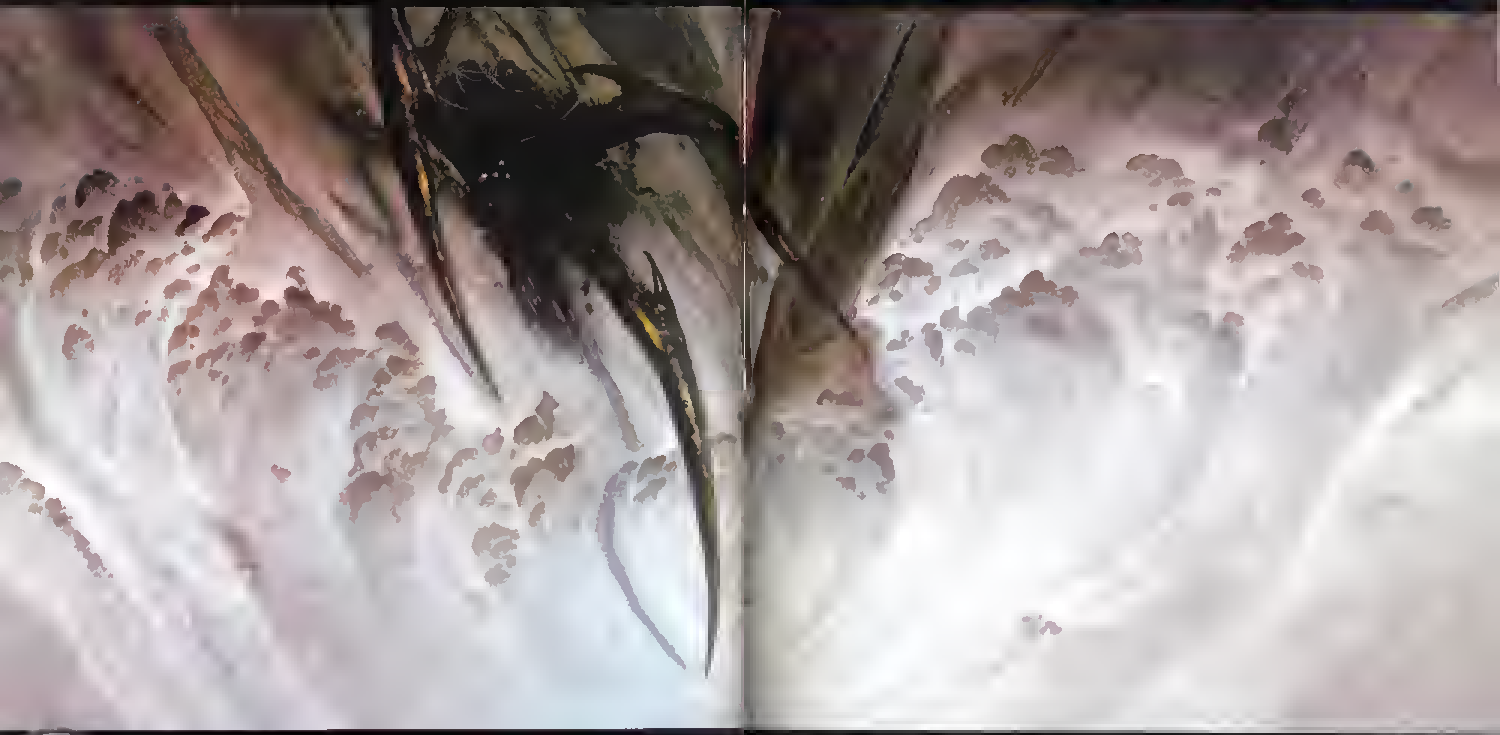
SHELOB'S LAIR



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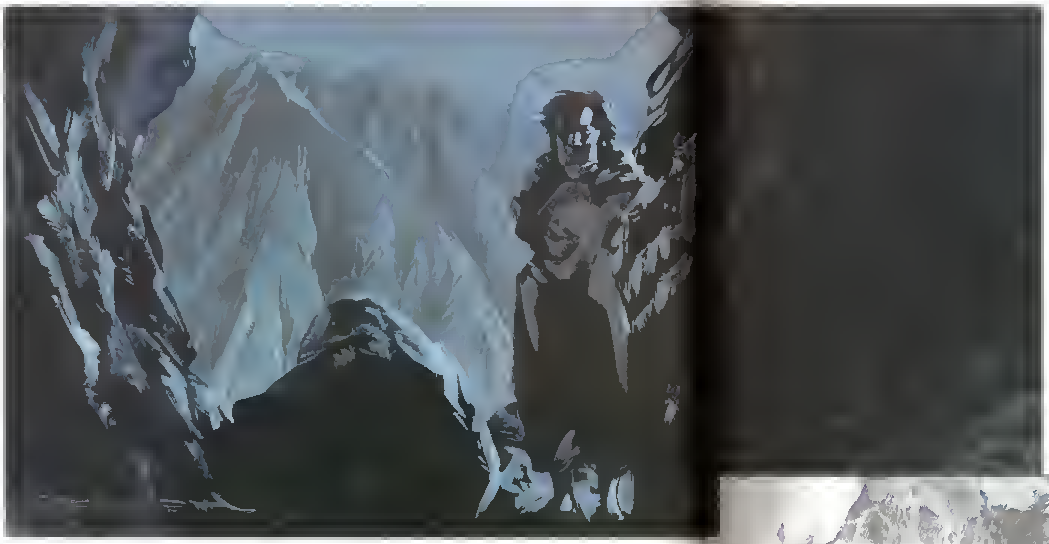
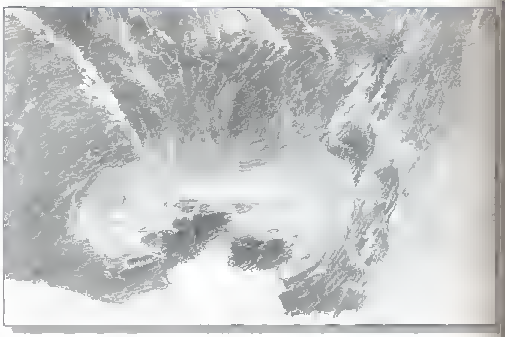
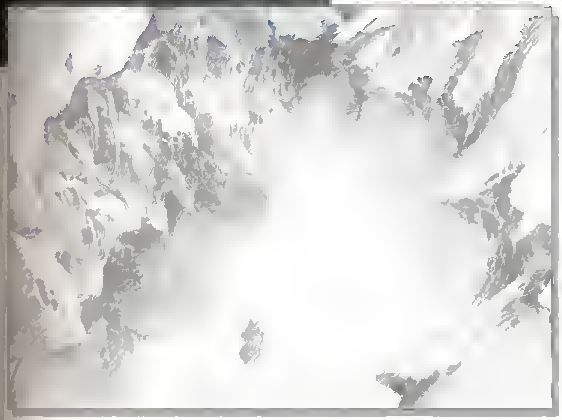


SHELOB'S LAIR
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"Frodo is standing right at the mouth of Shelob's Lair, and we're just looking back out over the Morgul valley over to the other side. At this time, it's early morning, and there is this very weak light that is coming through the clouds. It's very cold, and I think we can tell that Frodo is feeling a little unsure about some of his recent decisions."

SHELOB'S LAIR
Digital composite
Karen deJong
"Taking Jeremy's painting, opposite, as my lead, I painted the Morgul mountains to fill the mouth of the tunnel entrance. The castle live plate had been lit to represent the moon shining in, so the direction of the light had to be taken into account when adding atmosphere to the painting."

SHELOB'S LAIR
Watercolor
John Howe
"Shelob squeezing forth from one of her many back doors. If a raspy, dry, squelching sound was possible, that's the sound she would make as she oozes her body through the mouth of the tunnel."





SHELOB'S LAIR
Sketches
Alan Lee
"The picture below is Frodo in Shelob's tunnel, making his way along the passageway, with Shelob just emerging from another hole higher up. We see just her legs and body starting topsl themselves out of the hole before the scene where she finally attacks him.

"The drawing opposite is part of the cave environment, showing a crack that Gollum goes tumbling through during a fight he has with Frodo, just after they've come out of Shelob's tunnel."

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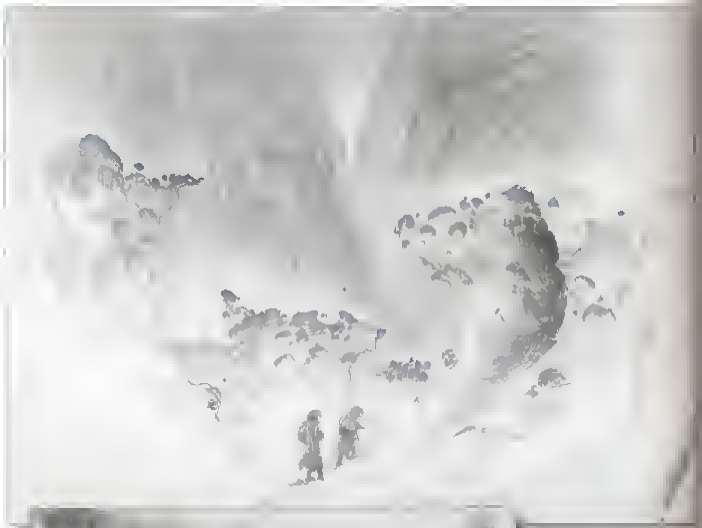
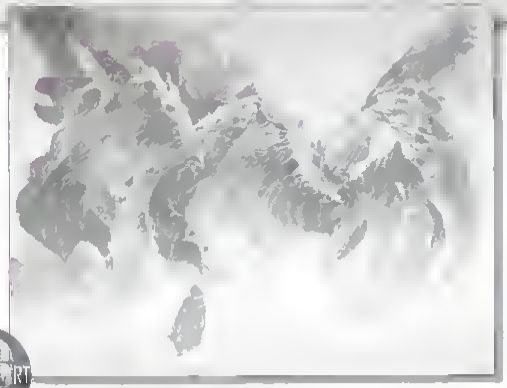
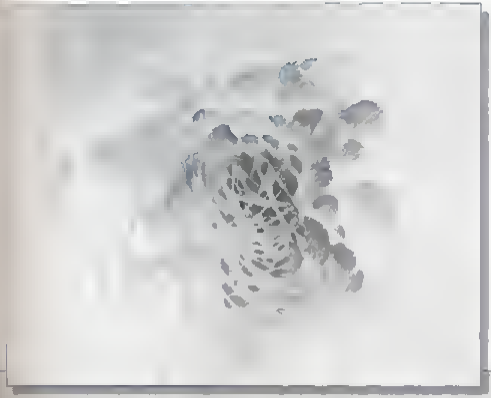


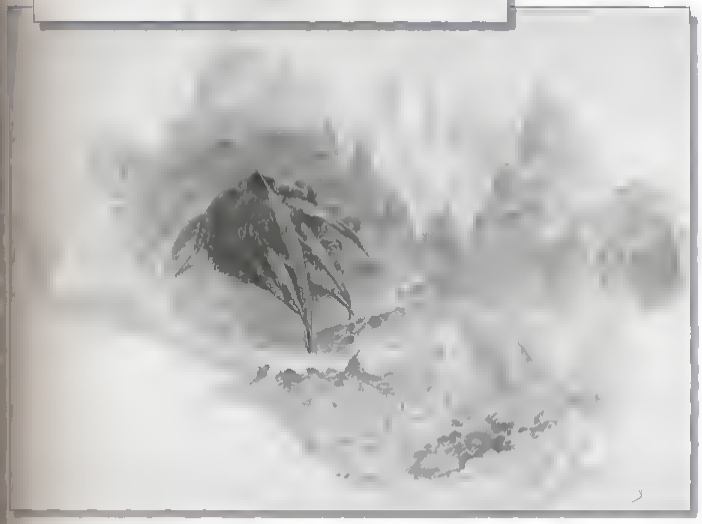


SHELOB'S LAIR
Sketch
John Howe
"In this sketch you can see numerous dangling holes above the path through the mountains – the path itself is corroded and holes away by Shelob's poisonous nature."

SHELOB'S LAIR
Sketch
John Howe
"The whole environment is eaten away by the concentrate evil of Shelob. Rather than following a small path at the bottom of a declivity, the hobbits find themselves in a horrid avenue of veined rock, impossible to scale, impossible to escape from."



SHELOB'S LAIR
Sketches
John Howe
"There's always something incredibly creepy about a spider waiting motionless for its prey. The overhanging corroded rock that the hobbits have been walking through is an extension of her trap – a trap into which they have been falling ever since being persuaded to climb the Endless Stair."



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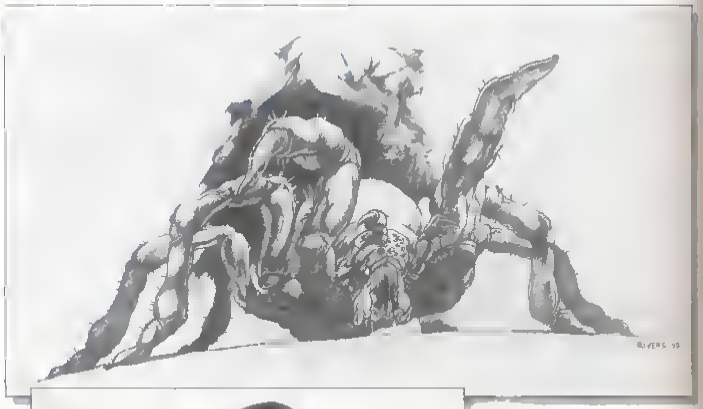

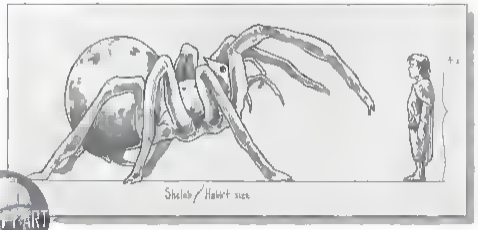

SHELOB
Concepts
Christian Rivers
"Above is the first Shelob drawing that I did, back in 1997 and it's a bit monstrous: the legs are extremely fat and there are about thirty eyes! It was more of an overdrive illustration than a design.

"There was then a long break after this initial work, and we hit the different designs for the other two movies before we came back to Shelob in 1999. By then, I was a lot more familiar with spider types, so the one on the left is based on a particular spider; I'd seen that I'd really like to have, with that crest and pattern on its abdomen. Basically, I chose a spider that I felt looked feminine, then extrapolated that to a larger scale, and just played around until I was happy with the feel of it and then colored her up as a concept. I wanted to make her feel gaiful – all browns and whites to make her look old and reflect the fact that she lives indoors all the time, especially with the black underneath her thorax and abdomen, all horribly sickly colors. I then added the stinger, which spiders don't have but is something Shelob has. Anyway, by this time Peter thought it looked a bit too dainty, a bit too fragile. The mandibles are very thick and the abdomen is very large, so it's a lot more in the proportions of a black widow. Peter wanted something more brutal."

SHELOB
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"I was designing Wargs while everyone else was playing with Shelob, so I wasn't able to do any designs of her. This was really just a schematic of the maquettes that had been there to try to get the size and proportions."

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SHELOB
Maquette
Ian Whittlesea
"There were three body maquettes: this one for Shelob and this was the most successful – it's about eighteen inches in diameter. Some things work well here, the immense weight of her abdomen – it's very baggy and wrinkly and we even actually sent that it's resting on the back leg, it's so fat. Peter really liked the build of funnel-web spiders, which have reasonably long but chunky, very strong looking legs, so we can see that proportion here. The face design evolved as Peter kept coming up with ideas, but the coloration and the general build of Shelob carried through for a long time. However, this was designed four years ago, and Peter's come back to it one, after four years he's got a different image of what he sees as a really scary spider."

SHELOB
Concept
Christian Rivers
"Probably following Peter's comments about not looking too much like a normal spider, I took John Howe's head, taking it further into a monstrous spider shape, with a much harder exoskeleton down the head. Something Peter and also mentioned was that he wanted the head to have some character and also the ability to move and look at its target – which spiders can't do – they put more than whole body. So I took those comments quite literally and created this design, which obviously has a separate head. Rightfully so. Peter said that it looked more like a cockroach or some now and look away a lot of the manner of the spider. The about you go to a spider, the scarier it becomes. I think everyone can relate to that, especially arachnophobes."

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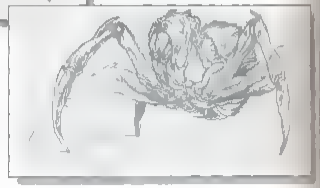
SHELOB
Concept
Christian Rivers

"This, I thought, was suitably terrifying. It's actually based on a funnel-web spider, a deadly poisonous spider that lives in New South Wales, Australia. It's one of the most brutal, ugly-looking spiders on the planet: really black with a dull gray abdomen, huge mandibles, huge fangs and this really disgusting, perfectly Mordoresque color combination of black and red. I've added those pallid, fatty deposits under the eyes and round the abdomen. Peter quite liked this, but he also felt it didn't have enough character, enough personality, whereas it was very successful at looking like a really horrible, brutal spider. It didn't say 'Shelob,' but it was a good place to begin."

SHELOB
Concept
Christian Rivers

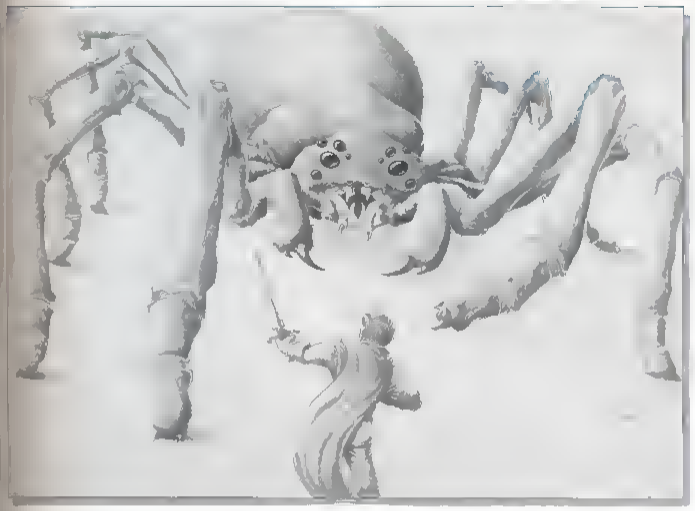
"One of the things we were trying to do with the design of Shelob was to convey a distinct character for her. For this one, I tried to incorporate all the relevant comments from our discussions, and I gave the mandibles more character, trying to keep a feminine look and narrowing down the face. John Howe had drawn spiders and these weird horns — she is actually described in the book as having horns — so I took that and played around with it, but the result is too monstrous. I got rid of the bulbous shape — again, I felt this gave her more character — and covered her back with webs. There are working lines here. I was making her bigger and trying to give her a lot more vertical height to carry those weird horny protrusions along the spine and top of the abdomen, but these never think with webs so that they were softened, giving the horrible combination of old web stretched across her back and then these horrible, hanging fatty deposits underneath her abdomen. All pretty disgusting stuff. I don't think any of us, until we got to the [illegible] stage, went down the tarantula path, because everyone knows what a tarantula looks like — it [illegible] obvious a design. 'Oh look, a giant spider, it must be a tarantula, oooh!'"



SHELOB
Concept
Christian Rivers

"I remember Peter had made a comment those lifting her head and making it more prominent. I understand now. But he was after a dichotomy character for her, but I took that literally. So I lifted the head up and gave her this weird, antennae horns so the head sits proud on the rest of her. The legs on this one are much too crabby and alien-looking. It wasn't particularly successful, as a spiderlike design goes.

"She does look old, though. I think it's the use of the mass of wrinkles and flesh hanging under her, and also the pitted holes in the thorax and balding spots in the hair on her head. Actually the balding spots idea is something we've turned right through to our current designs."



SHELOB
Concepts
Shaun Felton

"The top one came first and was are trying out a few preliminary ideas, just to see what Peter responded to. It was a little tricky because I'm not particularly arachnophobic, and people who are all cases to have a different reason for doing so — some find the number of legs scary, others the way they walk. So trying to make a scary, creepy spider monster when you're not scared by spiders was a bit tricky. At the stage we were trying to keep it more along the lines of a proper spider, rather than Tolkien's description, which is different, this version has horns and paws and all sorts of things.

"The lower drawing has different legs. I was just trying to get more a spidery look to it. There's a lot more attached to the one. Making a lie of what I said just now, one thing I always find a creepy aspect in spiders is the multiple eyes. And there's something a little different going on here with the eyes, which I did to tie in to the Tolkien description."

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SHELOB
Maquettes
Ben Wootten
"In some ways I prefer this sculpt because it hasn't been painted. With a flat tone, it's easier to study than the other maquettes. I like these sculpts, they been a new life to them."

SHELOB
Sketches
Alan Lee
"The face is obviously the most crucial part of her design, because it's the eyes that capture your attention and hold the key to Shelob's personality or lack of. So both Christian and myself had done quite a few drawings of different varieties on eye design and the length of the fangs. I also went through some spider books and did several pages of drawings straight from that, just to try to learn for myself what a spider would look like, having never spent much time looking closely at them.

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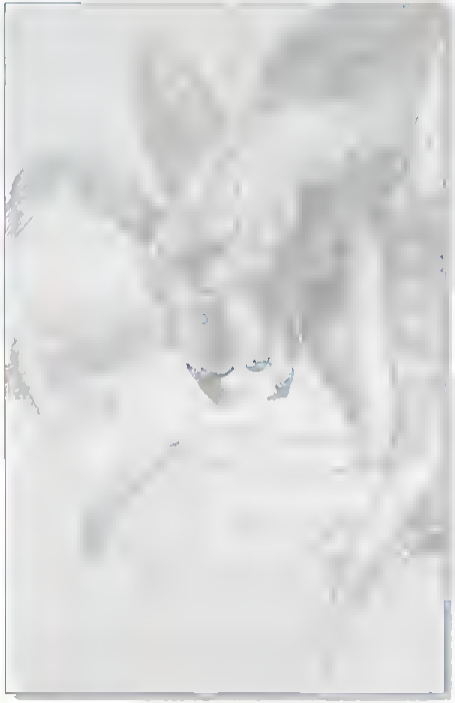
SHELOB
Maquettes
Jane Bawerick
Using some inspiration from Christian's images in on the previous spread – and in the look of the eyes and mandibles – Jamie produced these vivid sculptures.



SHELOB
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is just me imagining how she might be holding Frodo as she twists and turns and in her arms while covering him with her silk. And of the features that Tolkien brings out very well is a feeling of her weight and age, and the massive slightly repellent quality of her flesh. He describes quite beautifully the way it compresses as she pulls herself through a crack in the rock. We had done a lot of design work on Shelob, and produced a very finished sculpture, which Peter wanted to modify because it didn't actually remind him that much of the broadcast spiders that he'd encountered. So he drew our attention to a spider that had particularly scared him – and which still does. We got photographs of that and made some amendments to the design to give Peter the frisson of fear that he wanted. He made the point that there's nothing quite as freaky as a real spider. There were some more scorpionesque elements that other artists had done, which we then moved away from a little bit."

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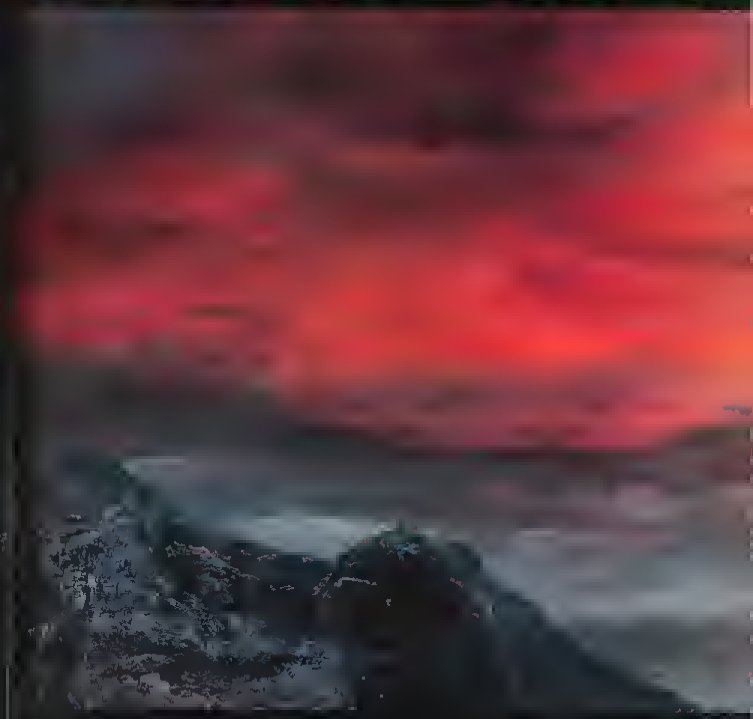
CIRITH UNGOL



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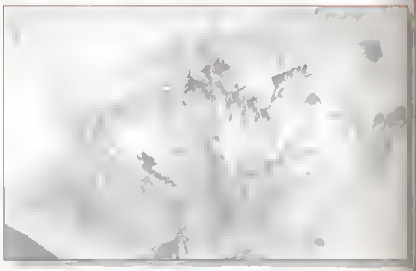
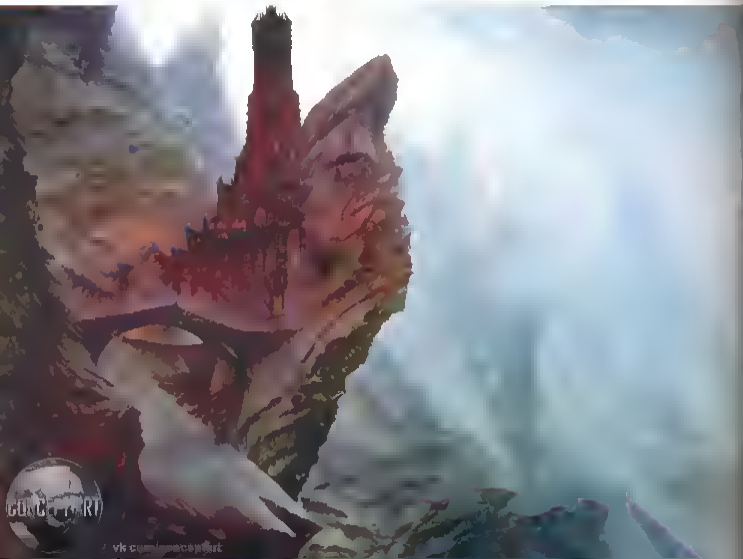
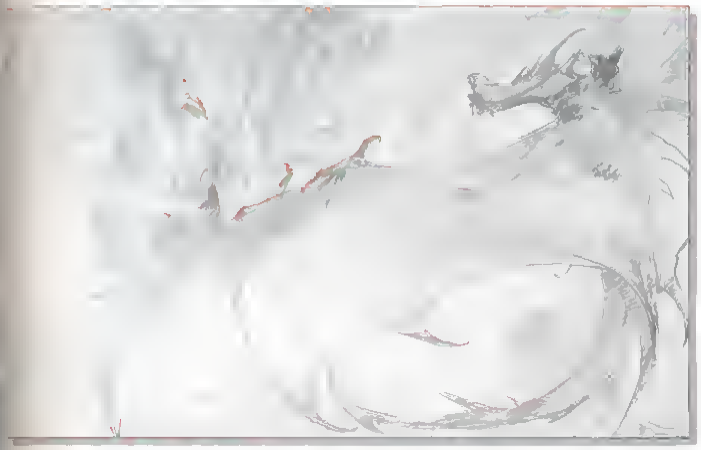
◇◇ CIRITH UNGOL
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"A broad view of the Cirith Ungol range, looking up toward the sky. This was painted to be a counter backdrop usable in a variety of shots, hence the distorted angles. The final shots were much darker, but this has been preserved lightly to show the detail of the painting, which represented over five miles of mountains. A miniature of the Cirith Ungol tower is included for scale. Because this was used for a number of shots at varying angles, it was projected onto varying complexities of geometry."



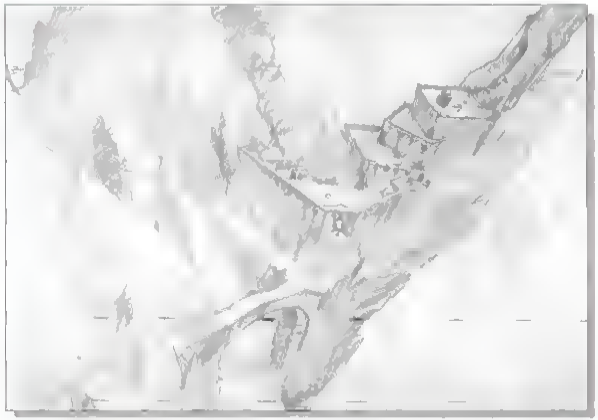
◇ CIRITH UNGOL
Watercolor and ink
John Howe
"Cirith Ungol was originally built to keep Sauron in Mordor, and has strong Numenórean foundations. Sauron has turned it into a thinly manned, near forgotten outpost. I imagined it lost in an incredibly tormented wilderness of pinnacles and precipices."



◇ CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
John Howe
"Cirith Ungol is not a conventional fortress, with its hanging terraces and courts and angles all askew. We wanted to convey the precarious nature of the structure perched on a pinnacle of rock over an abyss. Traces of earlier foundations can be seen beneath the three more haphazard repairs and "improvements."



CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
John Howe
"Here we see Ringil subduing the murders of Gondor. The sketch began as an extension of the sketch below, and quickly grew into a rapid study of a bad heart in flight.



CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
John Howe
"I mean all of Mordor unless an underlying disorientation of the scenes. The rocks and mountains of Mordor are just too knife-edged and overhanging to be possible in our world. The whole environment is off-balance, ready to crumble into one with Beowen's frame."

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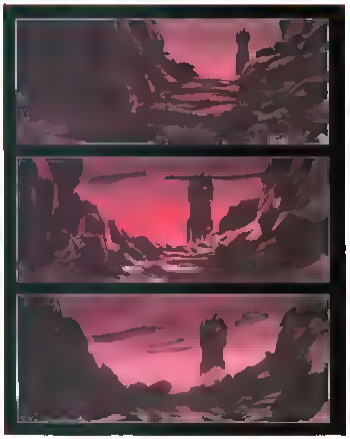
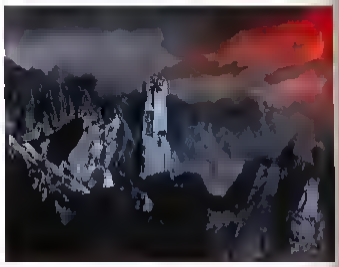
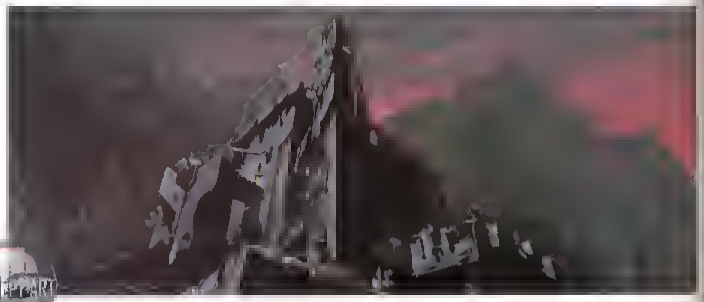


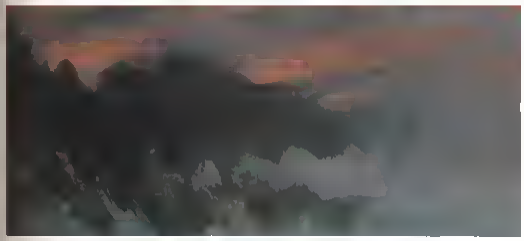
◊ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"These are three studies of the moment when Sam runs up from the bottom of the frame, into the shot, and hides behind a rock at the top of these stairs. Off in the distance is the tower. Those were done to get Peter to tell us where he would like to see the tower, how much of it he would like to see, how much detail he might like to see on it, and possibly have a look at the brightness of the distant sky, which is over Mordor and so is affected by Mount Doom.

◊ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"This was the first defined look for the Cirith Ungol mountain range. The composition includes the miniature elements of rocks and tower, with the final matte painted background.

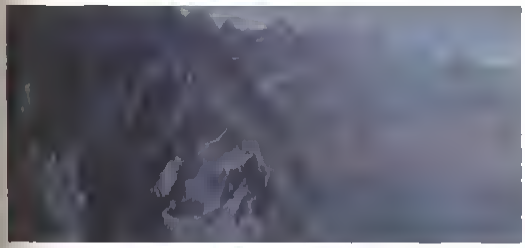


◊ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the opening shot of the moment where we fly up to Cirith Ungol tower. It's really just a look at the background, done very, very quickly. We were looking at the color palette, and I think Peter enjoyed that. It wasn't too saturated, which means the matte artist, in the case Roger Kupelian, could pretty much match the shapes here, as there's a lot of detail."

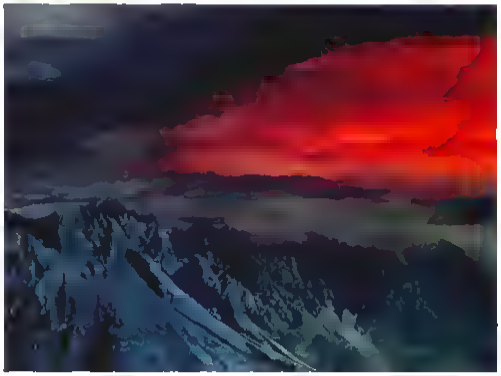




◊ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Color study
Paul Lasaine
This is a Cirith Ungol color study that Paul did looking over the top of the Mordor Mountains and revealing that telltale red glow underlighting the clouds. Although Paul Lasaine left the team during pre-production on *The Fellowship of the Ring*, he contributed something to both subsequent movies, as Jeremy Bennett explains: "Paul has a wonderful color sense and a deft touch with a paintbrush, two attributes that certainly influence myself and others around him."



◊ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"In the kind of picture I'll give to a matte painter, along with a number of photographic elements — blurred shots of rock textures or mountains that we will land taken on sound stages — that I would like the painter to cut and paste as to create this new environment. So live painting is an approximation of what it should look like. Paintings as large as this are also good to give to a matte painter because nothing is hinged to stone, and they can go and have a lot of fun."



CIRITH UNGOL
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"The Cirith Ungol mountain range, showing a red glow from Final Doom, which is just offscreen. Getting a realistic red glow from Mordor in an otherwise cool, twilight evening sky was tricky, to say the least."

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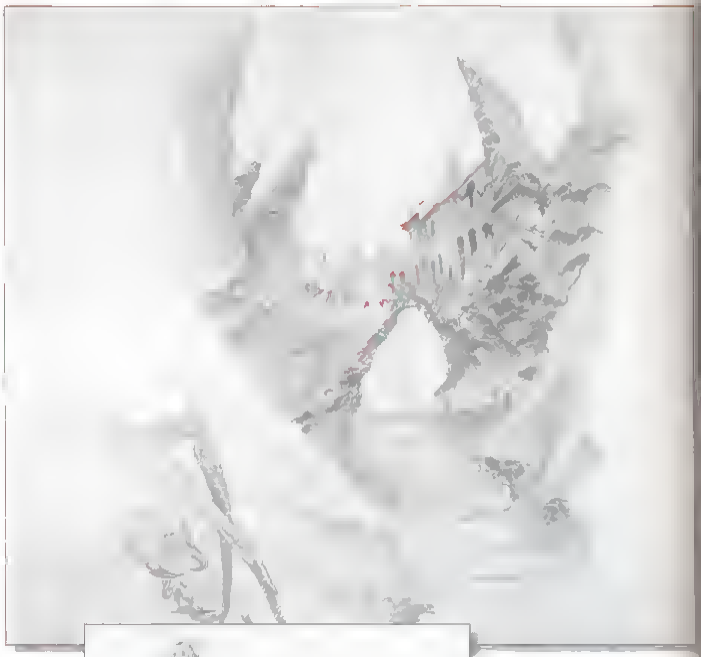
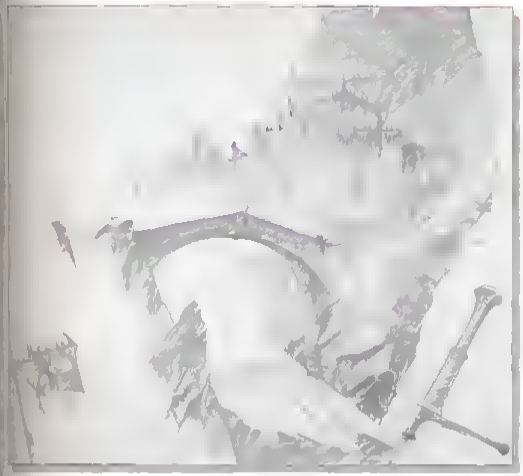


CIRITH UNGOL
Sketches
John Howe
"These are outposts along the pass. The row of spikes are to keep you-know-who from pushing off lady Orcs when she gets hungry.

"The smaller sketch is of details of Orcish architecture, which will be seen at the top of the tower."



CIRITH UNGOL
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the revised version based upon the first frame of what is actually quite an elaborate shot, where we fly right up into that window, right into the lap of the tower to reveal Frodo lying naked on the floor — and I guess there's an Orc Overseer there too. I did this as a quick look at the environment and color palette how dark it would be. It's at night, but we're on the Mordor side of the mountains, so there would be a red waste somewhere there. Jeremy really was just to show Pete, to get him to tell us how bright or how red or how saturated he would like to see the sky."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
John Howe
"Cirith Ungol bridge. Even more uncomfortable than the idea of a deadly drop off the bridge was the idea that you might survive the fall, and Uruk slide down the slippery slope to fall off the edge of that."

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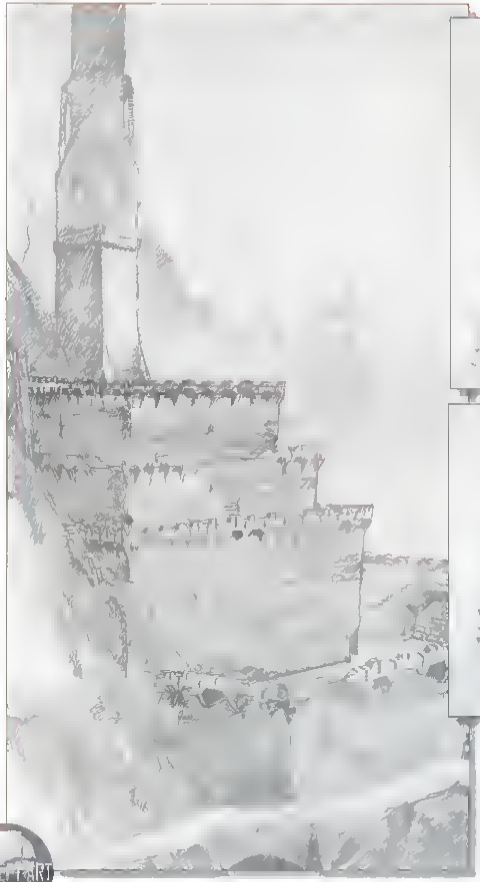

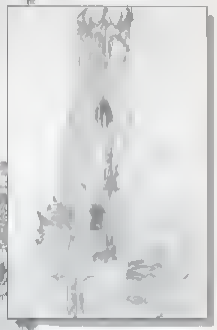

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketches
John Howe

"Initially, I did a fairly straightforward rendering of Cirith Ungol (left), which went as far as a cardboard mock-up before Richard Taylor said, 'Don't you think this is kind of boring?' (in that nice, unassuming way he has). That discussion resulted in a serious remaking of the fortress (above and opposite) placing it out on a spur of rock and setting each level at an angle from the ones above and below."

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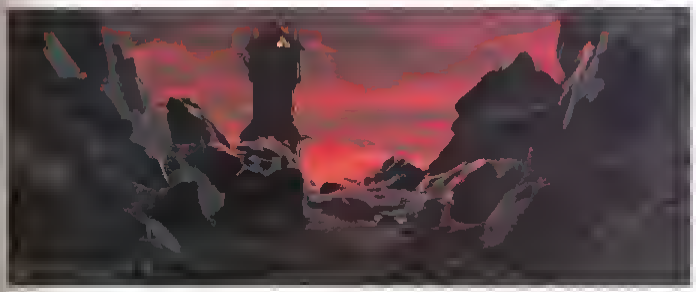

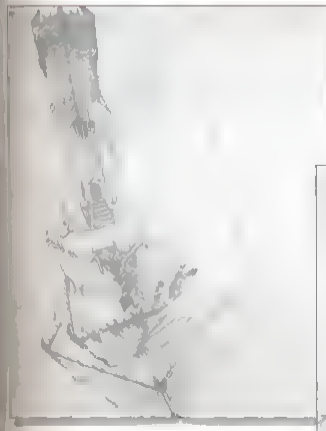

CIRITH UNGOL
Color study
Jeremy Bennett

"Recently Peter looked at some of the tower stuff we'd done awhile back to see if we were still thinking along the lines now that we had been back then. However, he liked they looked like scenes from a 1950s sci-fi film – too red – and rejected them. So I then went and did this, a quick little sketch where the foreground is a lot cooler and we're stepping back to that warmer Mordor sky. The composition has since been changed again, and I think we've moved the tower over to the right-hand side. That's why these studies are really helpful for Peter. It's very good at looking at a painting and identifying exactly what he does and doesn't like."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketches
Alan Lee

"In my right sketch of the top of the miniature and shows how a skimmerman number might have been adapted by the Orcs that later captured and inhabited it. So it got these large pieces of metal, which help to hold the crumbling structure together, but also serve to remind us that we're at a really evil place.

"As for right illustration, in part a little bit of the Cirith Ungol miniature that was built. We have did a number of designs for the tower and many of these were incorporated into the look of the final miniature that we built."

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CIRITH UNGOL
Color study
Jeremy Bennett

"We're looking down into the Cirith Ungol tower courtyard. There's a little bit of light coming from the doorway that Sam will enter through. In the top left corner is the bridge, and halfway between is the actual entrance, so he's just come down out of Shelob's Lair and followed the Orcs and Uruk-hai that have picked up Frodo and taken him off. The miniature of this set is amazing, there's so much detail in it, and it'll be interesting to see how much of that comes across onscreen. I imagine some of it will be lost, but at least you'll know it's there."

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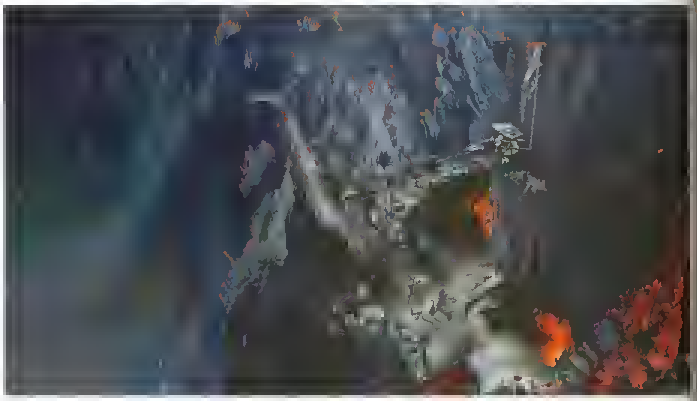

CIRITH UNGOL TOWER
Digital matte painting
Roger Kupelian
"This features the miniature of the Cirith Ungol tower in the foreground, and directly behind it the final matte painting. This was a difficult crane shot, and the pieces had to be overpainted to show parallax."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketches
John Howe
"The hobbits take refuge in the culverts below Cirith Ungol. Two versions, one stone, one clad in metal that has burst and looks like a fanged mouth.

"A very unusual looking phase, to be sure. Peter's cutlassed man 'Curry night at Cirith Ungol.' Very cool scene."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
John Howe
"An early sketch of the Watchers. Tolkien works his typical magic, providing enough detail to get a drawing 'right' in the encyclopedic sense — number of heads, the positioning of the statues — but that's it. To find the rest means going down, down, down into the catacombs of your own pantheon of gods and horrors."

CIRITH UNGOL WATCHERS
Sketches
Alan Lee
"Above is an early design for the Watchers — eerie stone figures that scream out a warning when a stranger walks past the entrance to the tower of Cirith Ungol. They're quite animalistic although crouched in vulture-like positions. Quite a Frankish look. Above are the more finished designs, stone wool off to become sculpts."

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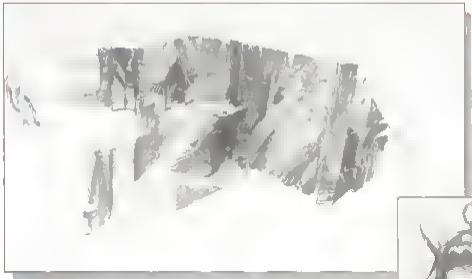

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"I did a large number of studies of Cirith Ungol for the sequence of the miniature and the sets. John and Dave sent drawings too and we used some of his ideas, like the doorways set into corners, and the Orcish embellishments, as a guide. What we wanted to do with the set was create a cast coordinator's paradise with lots of possibilities for rolling down stairs and running through flimsy rooms."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The lantern that sits in the very top of the tower of Cirith Ungol. I thought the Orcs might have bashed it together from bits of scrap that they have grabbed from some Gondorians. They'd also, as a kind of vile mockery."

CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Another view of the set for Cirith Ungol. My first drawings were costed and found to be well over the allotted budget, so we found a few areas that we could cut back on, and managed to produce a set where every angle offered something interesting to look at."

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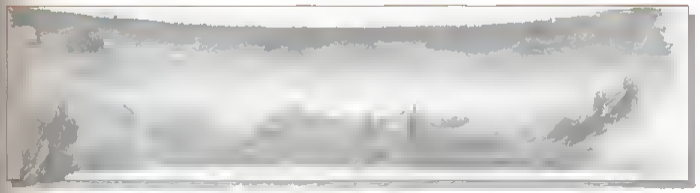

◇ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Sketches
Alan Lee
"Ideas for a spectacle that was painted around the Cirith Ungol set, showing moonlit and a glowing, sulphurous, atmospheric sky."

◇ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Sketch
Alan Lee
"Another ruined Gondorian hold. Cirith Ungol had been built originally by the Gondorians to keep a watchful eye on Mordor, and it had long since been raided such by Sauron's Orcs, who had refurbished it in look very charming way. I liked the idea that this noble hold had been part of the original building, and the Orcs had set up a sort of temple's tool in its crypts, with a heavy-duty screwdriver ready for use. There were also some stone balls that could be rolled out of the gap where his chair stood to be onto any invading forces far hand. I don't think the camera quite managed to take all this in, and I know it was there. And now you do, too."

◇ **CIRITH UNGOL**
Sketch
John Howe
"The lower courtyard. Here, I was trying to add something colossal and an architectural style based on having doors in corners."

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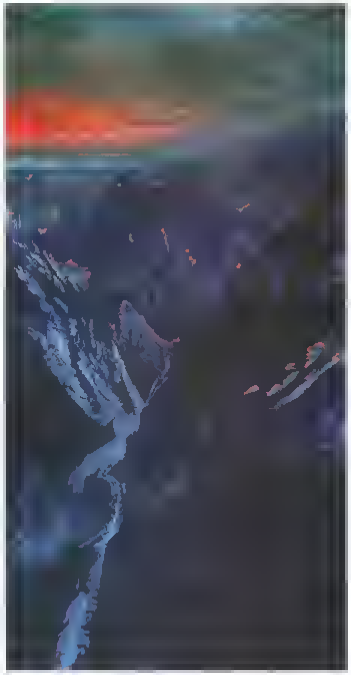
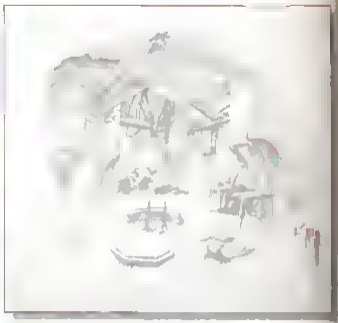
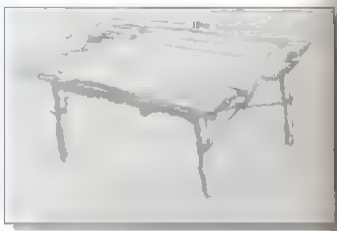


CIRITH UNGOL
Digital matte painting
Roger Kujel an
"This unusually shaped painting, showing the view from the top of the Cirith Ungol tower to the Gargoyle Pass far below, was designed in this format so that it could follow the tilt-down of the camera, which in turn is following an unfortunate Orc as it falls out of the tower down to its doom."



CIRITH UNGOL
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is the room at the top of the Cirith Ungol tower, where Faramir has been taken by the Orcs. We can just see Sam climbing up the ladder to rescue him. This set was built separately, but the interior of the tower below the trapdoor was part of the main set and offered more shot opportunities."



URUK-HAI FURNITURE
Prop design
Three Foot Six Art Department
"A could could by the Uruk-hai, so the ends look as if they've been chewed off by a cave-troll rather than cut with a saw. It's that sort of hacked-around look, running old plumbing, great big nails. We made all our own rope for the Orcs and Uruk-hai. For the other civilizations we could take natural hemp rope and dicelar 1, but with the best developed spaces we found the beautiful, old hand-winding repetaining machine and got a whole load of sacs and fibre and threaded it into the machine. As novice repetainers, of course, our efforts were all knobbly and quite rough, which worked incredibly well. Some of our furniture makers, for the finer pieces, were really accomplished craftsmen, but others were grips by people who d never made a stick of furniture b have life – perfect for something like this could where it chewed to look cobbled together."

CIRITH UNGOL URUK-HAI
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"Same old Uruk-hai, different armor. Dressed we'd already gone through the Helm's Deep Uruk-hai, and we'd already gone through the traveling Uruk-hai, we had to find something else that worked for them. I really like the idea that these guys were more Orc-like in their armor performance, with primitively worn leather over the top of shins, and lots of red, lots of Eyes. These guys are Sauron's – the earlier Uruk-hai wore the white hand of Saruman, but these guys have been tattooed with Sauron's Eye."

URUK-HAI FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department
"These are eating utensils for the Uruk-hai. Orcware we call it! They don t have the refinement of the other civilizations in Middle-earth, so everything is beaten with a big hammer on an anvil – they use copper and brass, but nothing is polished. Instead, it was corroded because hygiene wasn't a priority. The unfinished spikey thorder look continues over into the shoes and stools on the far left. Rough, unpleasant and therefore perfect for Orcs and Uruk-hai."

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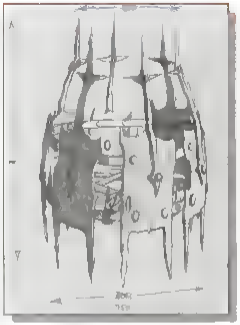
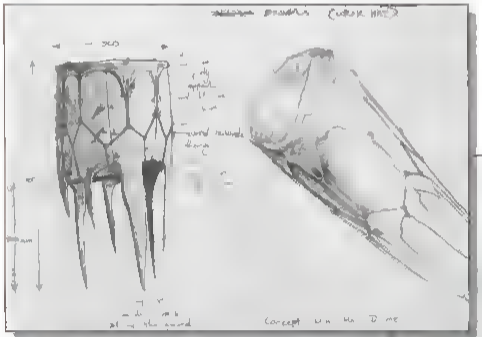


URUK-HAI FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department

"Three different basket designs and a brazier. We had the brazier designed along spiked lines, keeping it dangerous. Our blacksmiths took this and beat out pieces of steel and metal, then welded, then together; then added more rivets. Thus a working brazier we actually *did* fire in this. We took the view that because we couldn't buy anything for this film, let's make it as practical as possible. If it's a basket, it should hold coke. If it's a brazier, it should hold fire. We used coppers, blacksmiths and plasterboard.

"The leather bucket was made by our leatherworkers, on blacksmiths' tools. The copper can and arm pieces made the wooden can. The leather can, the one with the line through it, never got used. Or maybe it never went beyond the drawing board. That would have been Peter Jackson's decision as with no ears."



URUK-HAI FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department

"Uruk-hai drums, more refined than the ones we did for the Orcs. A leather drum, with aluminum surrounds, cut to shape so that rather than carrying these, with one should they'd put them on the ground, the spikes digging deep into the ground.

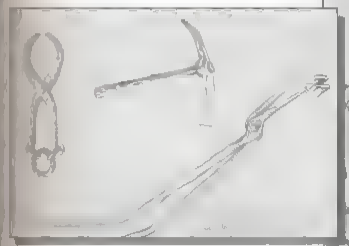
"Uruk-hai don't fire easily and can run for miles, but they have to have something to drink to carry their kit. Everyone also has bags, and as they're traveling pretty fast, often carrying quite a bit of stuff we thought why not give them bags, too?"

URUK-HAI FURNITURE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department

"We probably took ten different designs of these Uruk torches to Peter, and he *0 say which ones* he thought looked suitably dangerous and which ones looked a bit soft. You can see that Mordor influence again, spikes sticking up like on the Orthanc Tower — there is an evil influence in these, too

"Below left, we have large hooks. The Uruk-hai obviously there hit their weapons and tools as they and to have something to do them on. Hence, very practical stuff like blacksmith's anvilsrn. But hit would pretty there, so what a real blacksmith would times, if a little rougher.

"Finally, below are boots and another brazier. Once again, everything is spiky or sharp or misshapen. Nothing is regular, nothing's perfect. I mean it was that fourth-century influence. With each race we went for influences from our own civilization, so Neanderthal man is probably where you're coming from so far as the Uruk-hai are concerned. That was a theme we thought a lot about. We worked on the basic principle that Middle-earth was a medieval civilization — of course, in the books some things were *and* of time although we didn't use them, hobbits and watches and even a postal system, but we didn't go for those things because they are too big an anomaly visually. It makes people ask too many questions. But the Art Department, with John Howe, Alan Lee, Peter Jackson, Grant Major and Richard Taylor, worked through what each civilization was, what influenced them — the Rohan with their Viking culture, the Elves influences by trees, but also with highly sophisticated poetry and music. So once we'd established these influences, it became really easy to say, 'Well, that's obviously Elves' or 'That's obviously Dwarves,' and so on. We never defined a cut-off point, although I remember we said we'd start at early century and go on from there. Clearly some things were prior even to that, for example with the Orcs. These have periods even influences, manners, roads to start traveling round. And with Alan and John and our team of conceptual furniture and prop designers, it became apparent they'd go off on a bit of a tangent and draw four or five different things, and then you would pull each and say, 'Well, this one's right and those also are going a bit far in one way or another.' It was a very intuitive thing."



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THE PELENNOR FIELDS

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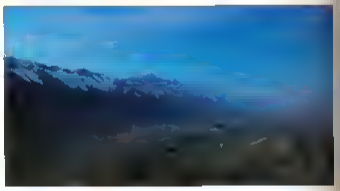
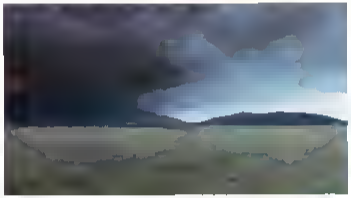
THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This is a 120-degree view of the Pelennor Fields at dawn, and it is the vista seen by Théoden as he leads the Rohirrim on their charge into Sauron's fires. It was particularly enjoyable to paint the low raking light across the hills and the Mordor range."

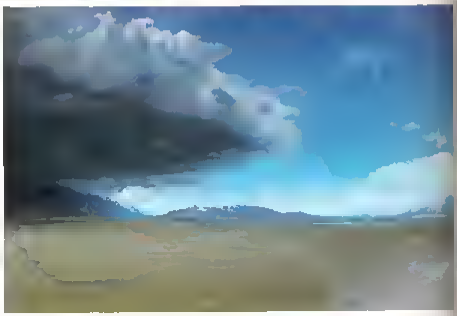


THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"This is the view looking south, and is a cropped portion of the painting which served as the backdrop in some of the north sequences. In this version, the Mordor cloud has advanced right across the plains to Minas Tirith, casting a cold and oppressive shadow over the land."



THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"This is a view looking north from the ramparts of Minas Tirith. In this shot Gandalf sees the progressive lighting of the beacons along the mountaintops, a signal for help. The original material was sourced from many source elements, all lit from the right-hand side and during midafternoon. Therefore, the challenge lay in relighting the scene to create the mood of the magic hour before nightfall."

THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This is the view from Minas Tirith on Faramir leads the charge in Osgiliath. It's still early in the day as the cloud is yet to stretch across the would valley."



THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"When this was painted, there were only an animatic that came through at dawn. I imagined that the Rohan thought they were doing pretty and in the battle. Little did they know what was coming next! I think we've now got 18 or 20 mûmakil, and they come bearing those amazing creatures on their backs, full of Haradrim, which are going to blow people away. But when I painted this one, I was wondering what the towers on their backs were going to look like. I pictured Spanish galleons. You would just imagine how confusing they would be – looking up [illegible] the mist to see cloud shapeless things coming across dry land. [illegible] out of the mist appear these Elephants, fully [illegible] chains slung between the backs, armor on the [illegible] so big! These things were truly enormous."

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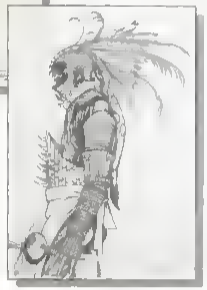

HARARRIM
Concepts
Johnny Brough
The Haradrim, or Southrons, were aradrim design challenge that evolved a great deal as the Weta designers went along. The earliest designs had been very tribal, some drawing heavily from Pacific Island motifs. However, the response from Peter and the other writers began to point cloud more in the direction of the already approved Easterling designs. Thus they became more heavily robed, and decorated with metals, whereas initially the artists and been suggesting they were limited to bone, wood, and porous materials. Indeed, one of the ways in which the Weta team attempted to categorise each army in Middle-earth, particularly the armed ones, was to establish and contrast the materials that each culture and lie work with. For the Haradrim, they and initially suggested that they lived in a region cold little access to metals, and so such all their metalwork would be imported at expense. They postulated that the Haradrim wore their armor out of plant fibers to produce thick and flexible matting. While the use of some metal did eventually and its way back in to the Southron designs, the woven armor remained as well, making an unusual and unique feature. This enabled the relationship between the Haradrim and the Easterlings to be plain, suggesting a kinship between the cultures that could be one of trade or conquest.

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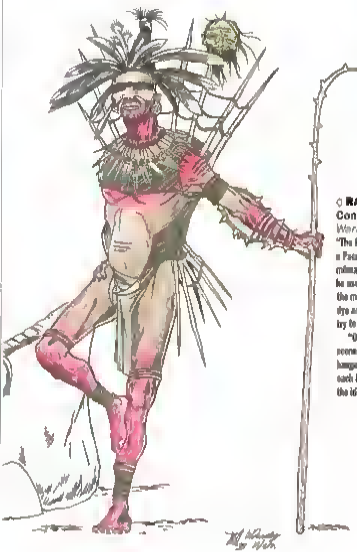
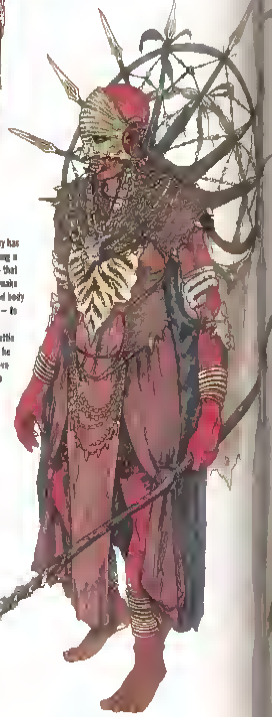


◊ HARADRIM
Armor concept
Daniel Falconer
"The Haradrim were a human race, but under the sway of evil. Whereas in *The Two Towers*, we were led to sympathize with the young Haradrim boy whom Faramir's men killed in *The Return of the King* we as an audience have to root for the good guys as they fight them. That meant dehumanizing the Haradrim when we see them in battle at the Pelennor Fields, something that was achieved with masks. The moment the human face is taken away, it is easier for an audience to accept a violent death without question or empathy. I tried to imbue the masks of the Haradrim with menace and cruelty. They are fearsome and brutal, so I hope the audience will feel comfortable with our heroes slaughtering them."



◊ HARADRIM
Concept
Warren Mahy
"The brief for the Haradrim was tribal. This guy has a Pacific Island sort of feel. I imagined this being a cultmask dresser, with a long spiked driving lance that he uses to steer, pulling the reins or shoulder to make the cultmask turn. Everyone was keen on the red body dye as well — gand or blood mixed with earth — to try to get some color into the design.

"One idea that was talked about for the battle scenes was that the Haradrim's victims would be hanging off the cultmask. The driver would shove each head that he cut off onto a spike. I think the idea got dropped quickly, but I liked it."

◊ HARADRIM
Armor concept
Daniel Falconer
"Among the motifs that were established to try and differentiate the Southrons was one idea of a ceremonial back-piece that became affectionately known around Weta as the "dreamcatcher." The idea was that some of the Haradrim leaders would have the role of war-priests, fashioned with totemic religious rather than practical significance. The back-piece created an interesting and unique silhouette, which would also help distinguish them on the battlefield, that body paint, symbolizing the blood of their enemies, was another idea, which would also carry through to their cultmask mounts."

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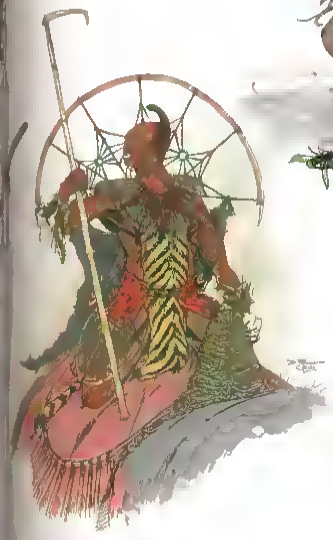
HARADRIM WAR-SINGER
Concept
Daniel Falconer
"Among the more wacky concepts was the Haradrim war-singer. The idea was that at each of the cultmasks there would be one aristocratic Southron who directed their course, shouting his orders down to his mount, including the steerers, from the highest point of the throne. This guy would be relatively unarmored, being up high above the battle, but he would wear a ceremonial headdress which was audacious in the likeness of their most honoured mount, the cultmask."



HARADRIM MÛMAK RIDER
Concept
Daniel Falconer
"Very early on in the design process this Haradrim was drawn, influenced heavily by a variety of African cultures. Immediately apparent was the fact that it drew Lee obviously from that source material. We didn't want the Haradrim to look African, but rather something explainable. While this idea didn't go any further, what did remain was the use of woven materials and the fan-like shape, which became a motif in their armor. The red body paint, introduced here, was also a feature that remained through much of the design process."

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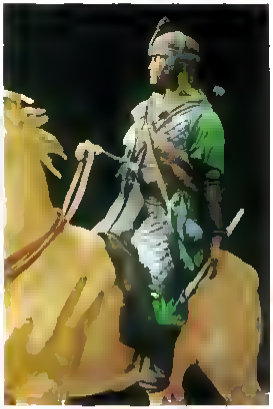
BATTLE OF THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Color study
Jeremy Bennett

"At this point Sauron's forces have broken through the Great Gates of the city using Grond, and it's down. So this is where we see Denethor, as a flaming fireball, throw himself off the seventh tier of Minas Tirith. We follow him down, and then the Rohan just smash through the foreground, ripping the Orcs apart. The battle is absolutely raging, Minas Tirith is on fire, and it's just carnage, wholesale slaughter. This was my impression of what that event might look like. I like the fact that everything, the whole landscape is on fire, although I'm not sure whether that's how it's going to look in the end. It might look worse."



ROHAN WARRIOR
Maquette
Alex Mahy

"I gave this guy a little boxed shield rather than a large shield, something he could use with his short sword. This was a look at the combination of fur and leather, a reference point for all the team."

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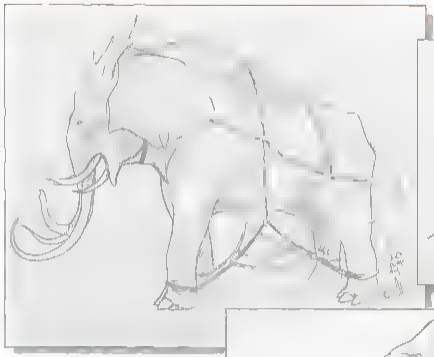
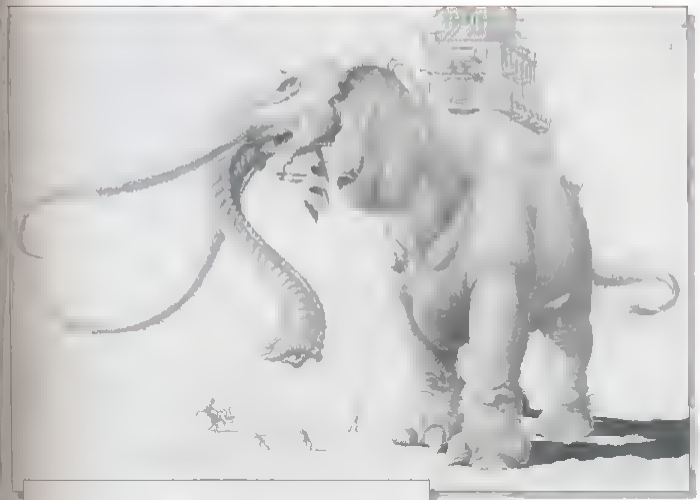


MÛMAKIL
Concepts
Warren Mahy

"I did a variety of different mûmak ideas – different ears, tusks, etc. The brief was to turn an elephant or an elephant type creature that had evolved from animals similar to known, existing creatures. I really liked the idea that, as you can see in the one bottom left, that there was a predatorie feeling to them, with serrated teeth and a really low-hung lip, multiple horns and a high forehead. And multiple toes rather than just one big toe. Having small ears increased the sense of the creature. The one directly above could be based just on ideas on a rhino or a hippo if has almost a wild boar feel to it. Here even has, perhaps, a bull-like head and an arched back – furthering some ideas I had when I was designing the Warg."



MÛMAKIL
Concepts
Shaun Rolton

"The one at the top is one of the earliest designs that I did. In fact, it might have been my second or third. I was going for something different – you've still got trunks and tusks, so it still looks like an elephant, but I was trying to alter the proportions to give it that sense of size. I had in mind some of the dinosaurs, with large legs and clawed feet. I quite liked the idea of having the head sat on a big thick neck, again giving it that dinosaur look. Since this was at the early stage, whenever we put something on a creature we hoped it would inspire the scriptwriters to use the creature in a new way.

"The one on the left was similar early design, concentrating on the head of the beast. I liked the heavy cartilage across the ears – I think we were going for the idea that they were controlled by the Haradrim pulling on the ears, so I gave it substantial ears that could lend some weight to that idea. I like the ragged edges to those great flaps – this was has seen a few battles in its time, I think. Peter Jackson had an idea that he wanted to have blades on the actual tusks, so the mûmakil could be even deadlier weapons. My thinking at this stage was to take the mûmak a little bit away from just looking like an elephant, looking it elephantine but with a few other bits thrown in."

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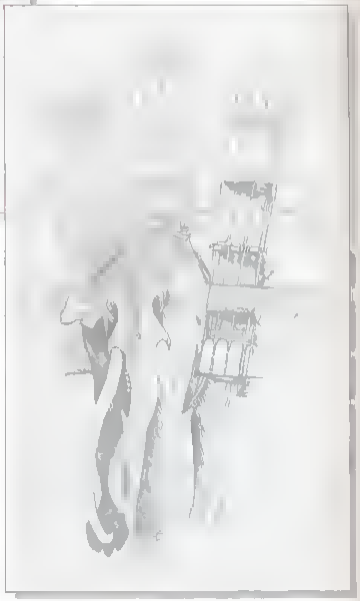

MÛMAKIL
Concepts
Seunsak Chanpaseuth

"The two sketches above are preliminary drawings of a mûmak and the crane scaffolding the Haradrim use to climb from their backs and scale the walls of Minas Tirith. The top right sketch demonstrates how they are quite resourceful in terms of using the constructions on the mûmak's back in a variety of ways. The Haradrim could park the mûmak right up against the wall, dismantle part of the structure on its back, and lay it flat, allowing the other crew members to run straight over the lower battlements. A lot of this idea came from Johnny Brough.

"If you look at the picture above, you can see some eye guards. I reasoned that, with this creature being forty feet tall, its skin would be pretty indestructible but the eyes would be vulnerable so it's wise to put an armor guard over them."

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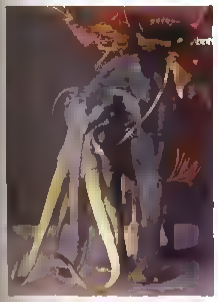

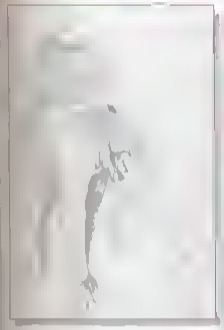

MÛMAKIL
Maquettes
Shaun Dohm

"The maquette was made from a design of Gamel's that Peter liked. I put turned it into a 30 creature with a few changes. Because I have a stop-motion background, a lot of my 20-creature designs don't design much as I progress to 30. At the back of my mind, no matter what I'm drawing, I am thinking in 3D. It often works out that I pencil it, then sculpt it, but sometimes I'm all over it up because by that stage I've moved on to something else. I didn't do the tower on the back of these maquettes, in fact, that's one of the reasons we had the maquettes in the first place — so that they could try building different structures on its back. I believe those were built by Rod Appleton, but were based on a design by Johnny Brough — he did quite a few passes of those, as you can see from the sketches above and opposite."

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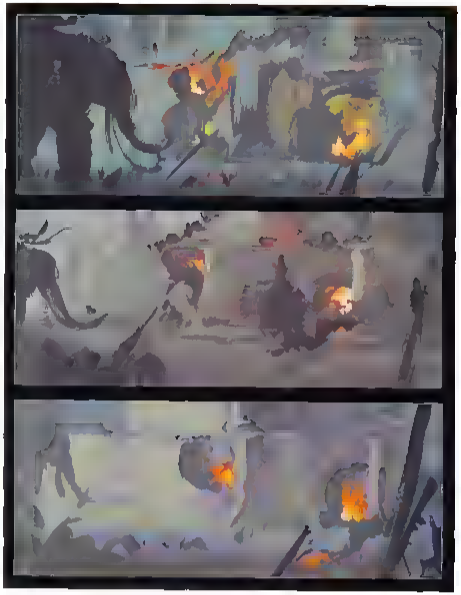
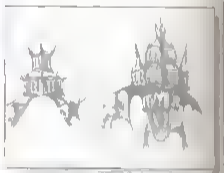
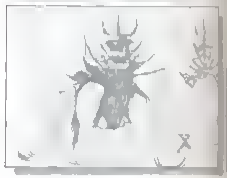


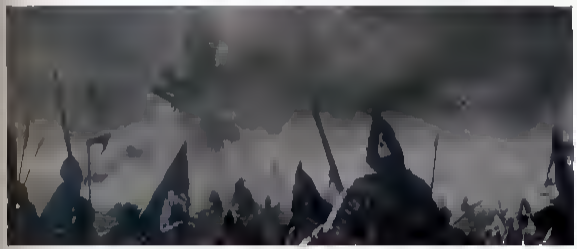
MÚMAKIL
Tower concepts
Christian Rivers
"When we began designing the múmakil, a lot of people drew the towers at the same time. I did those, however, after the creature had been designed and approved by Peter. We also had established a feel for the Haradrim – they were a primitive culture so their armor and weapons were more unconventional, crafted from ropes, wood, bone and base metals. So wanting to give the towers a similar organic rather than industrial feel. I drew wood and hides bound with ropes but still seeking quite aggressive shapes. I drew them almost like schematics, trying to demonstrate how the wooden frames and bindings would work. Yet it still seemed too European-looking, so I explored some same added more curves, played with interweavings of curved woods and basket forms. I liked the shapes that the woods and the hides were giving me, almost like a bat's wing. I like to sketch quickly, just letting the pencil go where it will, and sometimes a shape will grab me and I'll have no idea why. As those developed I started adding a few extras like giving the frames a spiked chest plate as an extra defense. We have things like that in the final [illegible] and boulders that are bound and reinced on. This organic look allowed the aggressive spike shapes to, in many ways, [illegible] hide and curves of the mastak. On a couple of those I found the Haradrim in, with tiny slits to shoot their arrows [illegible] discarded the – why would they bother? No one is going to attack them at the same height, just from below, so [illegible] had to be below their feet, not surrounding them."

MÚMAKIL
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"There were three little color boys that were produced before I started the paintbag overleaf. I used them to work out the color palette and went for the middle one, as that was a little sunnier than the other two. They are a great exercise to go through. I'd recommend it to anyone who's going to spend a day, or a day and a half, on a large paintbag, because you solve a lot of problems."

MÚMAKIL WARPAINT
Concepts
Dan el Falconer
"Before going into battle, we imagined the Haradrim decorating their beasts with elaborate warpaint and arcane symbols. This also served to help us differentiate the various mumakil in battle and rather simply and cheaply turn one model into many on screen. Working in Photoshop, I very quickly drew up a range of paint schemes, featuring a limited color palette that I imagined would be available in the Southrons, and employing stylized Eyes of Sauron, to whom the Haradrim were enthralled."







THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Colour studies
Gus Hunter
"These studies are early Photoshop concepts of múmakil coming through the mist and dust towards the Riders of Rohan."

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MUMAKIL REACH THE GATE
Lighting study
Jeremy Bennett

"Once again, a painting that was done quite some time ago, but Peter really liked it, and it was given to the miniature builders as the lighting guide for Minas Tirith [illegible] the siege. Peter loved this low late light, it's quite dramatic. He required this look, but he also wanted rising shadows from the siege towers and a warmer [illegible] ground. He said it felt like that post-storm moment, where you've still got black clouds over in one direction but you look the other way and the sun's [illegible]. So I commanded the cloud permanently over the Pelennor Fields, with the light, signifying the end of the day, just poking through—but you can still [illegible] at the top left-hand corner."

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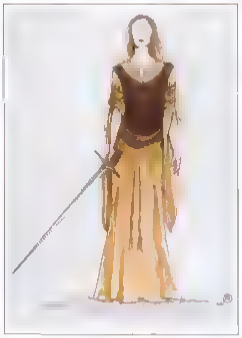
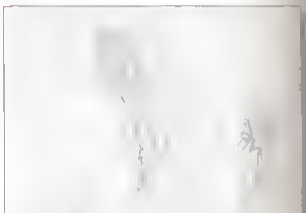


EOWYN
Costume
Nyffe Dickson

"I am always asked which costumes are my favorites and my armour has always been mine but here is one of the exceptions. This dress outlined for me the crossover between woman and warrior, the enduring conflict in Eowyn's character. The fabric of the dress is the softest silk, with very detailed pin-tucking and embroidery at the neck. We hand-wove the lacing that holds the sleeve back -- an important element for the fighting as we didn't want Eowyn to be inhibited by the volume of fabric in the sleeve. The soft brown suede of the corset is quilted -- then embroidered in a delicate gold thread. It took a lot of experimentation to get the balance of the embroidery right -- adding decoration while still keeping a practical value to the garment as a whole."



EOWYN'S ARMOR
Concepts
Christian Rivers

"We saw Eowyn in *The Two Towers* dressed mostly as a Rohan noble. In that film her biggest moment is when she goes in to battle of the Pelennor Fields and dispatches the Witch-king. Those more clearly designed will before the final Rohan armor was decided upon, but I felt she was a good character to design the armor around, considering that she would be one of the most prominent Rohan characters. In the top sketch, she is wearing a lot of shoulder, banded leather, of which I was a big fan back then. Also, I liked the idea of the Rohan having this strip across the face. It was very convenient here because Eowyn needed to have a disguise so that she wasn't recognizable in battle. Initially I considered something that was less Nasca than what we ended up with, and the one beneath is similar in design but with more furs and leathers, a bit more barbarian bordering on a Mongolian feel. But we didn't go that way, either. I mean I was trying too hard to think outside the world Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* as an alternative mythology to the Anglo-Saxon culture and so everything needed to fit that sensibility, that very European or Celtic mythology, yet I was purposely thinking that if the Rohan are a horse culture, then what was one of the greatest horse cultures in known history? It had to be the Mongolians, so I tried to armor that. Of course, the Mongolians have nothing to do with the Anglo-Saxons, so Tolkien probably wouldn't have approved!

"The lower sketch was done after Alan Lee and turned up -- he's obviously the king of designing, with a natural affinity for anything Norman or Saxon, whereas John Howe was more into the later medieval period. So I was borrowing from both, but heading toward a Norman look, a long shirt and a surcoat, but with medieval chain mail. I was looking at different ways of hanging the cloak on the shoulder with a [illegible] You can see in the little sketch in the corner that I went back to the veil, but made it a chain-mail [illegible] looking through a Norman armor book and found some chain-mail hoods that actually have [illegible] al straps across the face and ties up."

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ÉOWYN'S ARMOR
Concepts
Daniel Falconer

"Eowyn's armor had to be disguise as much as it was armor, and yet at the same time we didn't want to completely deformature our actress, so we tried to find ways to balance both needs.
The near-left illustration is the final approved design. The drawing was done as the leather armor was being built. It was another case of the craftsmen in the Weta workshop being intimately involved in the design process. Eowyn's helmet was designed to hide enough of her face to disguise the from a casual inspection."

EOWYN'S ARMOR
Concepts
Warren Mahy

"If she was going to be mistaken for a man, the armor had to be quite utilitarian. You could imagine the armor she's wearing in the sketch left, on a foot soldier, but here had to be reasonably form-fitting and accentuate the female form (of course!) But the scale mail the combination of the brass and bronze and the normal steel to create the patterning was definitely not as intricate as we developed as Eomer's armor it could quite easily have come from the Edoras armor store.

"Eowyn's shield was originally designed for Theoden but was then given to Eowyn because of the family relationship between the two

"Near left is a variation with a different sort of chain-mail. Chain and from a spikit at the top of it, just in added protection from the arms and down the shirt, and a very basic Rohan shield.

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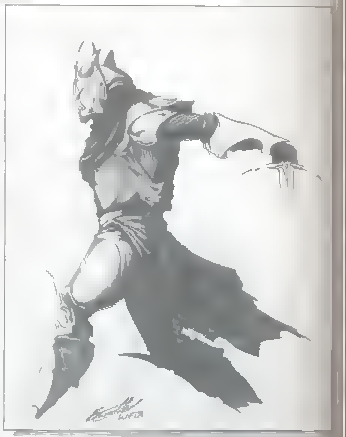
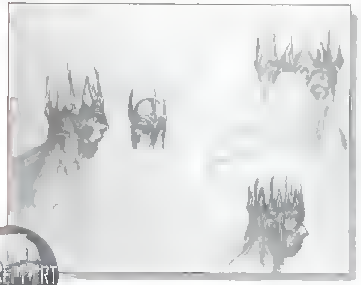
WITCH-KING VERSUS EOWYN
Concept
Christian Rivers
"I was just sketching one day and the pencil took me around the block and I ended up with an image of the Witch-king. This is the scene in which the Witch-king is about to stab Eowyn when Merry stabs him in the back with his small sword."

THE WITCH-KING'S HELMET
Concept
Dan el Falconer
"The Witch-king of Angmar's bobbed crest through a lengthy evolution. This early concept was inspired by descriptions of Morgoth's iron crown from *The Silmarillion*."

THE WITCH-KING
Sketches
Alan Lee
"In these drawings while working on designs for the crowns of the wraithworld Nazgûl in *The Fellowship of the Ring* speculating that the armored Witch-king would have a more helmet-like version of the same armor. Christian initiated the final design, which was aimed at avoiding the possibility the viewers might think that Sauron was in the field of battle, and also allowing the familiar hooded cloak to stay in place."





THE WITCH-KING
Concept
Ben Wootten
"This is early, 1994 I think. A very heavy fantasy influence in this artwork, with a bit of Frank Frazetta in the pose and definitely some early Dungeons and Dragons in the design. Work here is a more unadornated period of mine."

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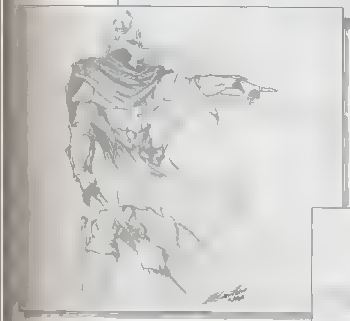
THE WITCH-KING
Concept
Ben Wootten
"A very early Witch-king idea. You can see a lot of Dungeons and Dragons influence in the even design. She is definitely pre-she-Nazgûl, probably while the first month of design on the project. It's a good pose, though, and there is dramatic effect I think just a nice feeling, but nothing like an effectively unused in the Return of the King."



THE WITCH-KING VERSUS EOWYN
Concept
Ben Wootten
"This was a more illustrative look at the situation, and I think the movement and intent of the Witch-king in this picture is more. And in the scattered heap of fell beast behind him we can see the wings and ribs splayed up from the wreckage. Bear in mind this is a creature the size of an aircraft. Eowyn looks a little too relaxed for the situation, perhaps because she hasn't quite taken stock of what's going to happen—she would be a bit more dynamic. The fact that he's wielding a mace that she is just one hand, and hovering above her, unnaturally tall in spite of the mind in his figure, these are elements that I like. At the time I did this, I was quite pleased with it. Now, not so much, but it's still good fun."

THE WITCH-KING
Concept
Ben Wootten
"This is from the same era as the sketch, right, but even less successful. The mace looks so appearance—it's described in detail in the book—but I came up with the shape probably more by luck than good judgment. The flavor of the shape lies we came up with for Morgul weaponry and armor is missing from this color design. There's also no concept of armor design to it, there's not really any concept of cloth design and the wizard face mask. The only thing I like is the long of white hair flowing around his face."

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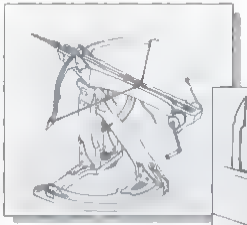
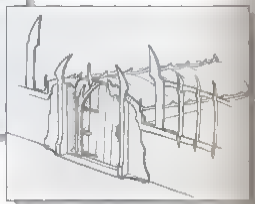
CORSAIRS
Sketches
Alan Lee

"I had no idea what Middle-earth pirates should look like, but I imagined that they may have the same attachment to pilfered finery and body decoration that we associate with historical pirates and other renegades. Bob Buick of the Wardrobe department took the mechanics a lot further, and came up with a lot of fun with them too – and I was pleased to see that some of the non-elite Haradri made the grade as Rohan or Gondorian warriors finally had the opportunity to make a brief and gritty appearance on screen."





CORSAIR SHIPS
Detail concepts
Ben Wootten

"The picture near right is a heavy, spear-throwing crossbow of which there are several mounted on the Black Ships. It had a semicircular base, so it can rotate around the central pivot point. We can see the little wheel at the end of the circular base. Again, scallopped details on the primary pieces, but of its heart it's a very simple design. There's nothing flashy about the way it works or what it does. It gives the hurt overhat napalm, firing flame arrows to burn enemy ships and heavy bolts to destroy enemy troops before boarding.

"The illustration at the far right is the deck in the captain's cabin under the poop deck, at the stern of the boat. The dangers are the seagoing corsairs of the Easterlings, so we [illegible] lot of familiar shapes, a lot of sharp spikes, curves, [illegible] hooks, and very similar in flavor and feels to [illegible] armor."

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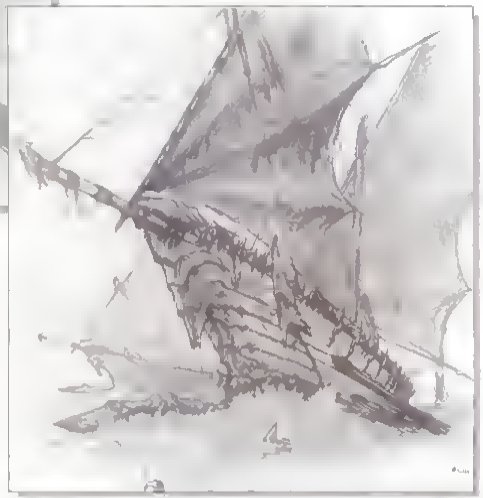
CORSAIR SHIP
Sketch
Alan Lee

"Did a few drawings of the Corsair boats, based loosely on Mediterranean galleys – before Ben produced his beautiful design. The somethere was built with working banks of oars, such were some used – probably because there would have to have been a *Ben Hur* style freeing of the galley slaves scene and would be a little beside the point."



CORSAIR SHIPS
Concepts
Ben Wootten

"Not liked the design of the above sketch, but just wanted to get a feel for the size of it, so I drew it from the waterline. Both designs have a strong mouth/like feel with the prow overhanging the large ram, making it seem very predatory. If that boat rammed yours, you would be stuck there until it found you were leaving. It's a pirate vessel, so it needs to look carefully dangerous, very sleek and very fast. They carry a huge amount of sail, a Latin design – almost Arabian, and with the sails it gives them a very distinctive silhouette and shape to the hull – almost like shark fins. It's a big boat, 270 feet long, and the one above is a slimmer-looking version which looks very like a troop ship than a pirate ship. In the end, despite the fact that it does fit the bill, it doesn't have the same dangerous utilitarian feel that the sketch in the right has. He can see it had boarding jacket and a very broad beam on it, so in a perfect world maybe we'd have both those designs and the troop ships and not support of the sailor-shaped ones."

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CORSAIR SHIPS

Concepts

Daniel Falconer

"In trying to imagine exciting ways for the Corsair ships to disgorge their cargo of undead onto the docks, I designed the ship above to have five extendable ramps, would would drop from their upright position on the deck, down over the side and bridge the gap between ship and dock. I imagined that one of the attributes of the Corsairs was to board and seize other ships very quickly because of their ability to land large numbers of their troops in one go with these multiple ramps.

"Although not terribly clear in the top illustration, opposite, the concept for a Corsair ship sported a pair of outriggers, making three hulls in total. Apart from its large fan-shaped sail area, the ship would be able to seat many rows of oarsmen in the three hulls, allowing for great bursts of speed. The outriggers' struts also served as boarding ramps for the troops I imagined would be carried on board, with retracting extensions that could be boosted when traveling, and dropped when engaged in boarding. I imagined this would be interesting to see on screen when Aragorn arrives with his undead army. Vertically mounted ballistae also protect the ship fore and aft, and three huge rudders, mounted at the front of the main sail and the and of each outrigger, would increase maneuverability. Beyond that, it was something we have never seen before.

"In an attempt to try to come up with a design for a ship that was both new and interesting, and allow for a dramatic entrance for Aragorn's undead soldiers at the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, I came up with the design at opposite bottom. The ship has a low profile, with the masts able to drop to remain unnoticed on the horizon for as long as possible. The sails were based on Pacific designs that I saw while researching at the museum, but [illegible] the vessel sports two rows of oars down each side of her long hull. I imagined the craft having a shallow draft to allow for beaching [illegible] when conducting coastal raids. The front of the ship would draw up as shallow as possible, and the huge inverted steel doors occupying [illegible] of the ship would open, allowing her cargo of troops to disembark en masse. I had Aragorn's arrival with the Army of the Dead in mind [illegible] this, though ultimately this concept went no further."

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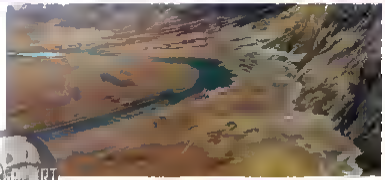

MINAS TIRITH DOCKS
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This is an aerial view of the docks, looking down on them as the Haradrim sweep in to attack Minas Tirith. You can just make out that the docks are made from the same white stone as the city."

CORSAIR SHIPS
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"The smaller painting opposite was just a small sketch showing the Black Ships of the Corsairs sailing up the River Anduin, as seen by Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli when they exit the Paths of the Dead. The one above was intended as a lighting study for the nighttime shoot."

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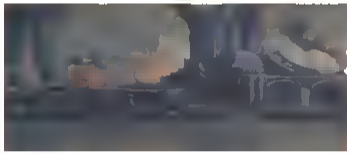
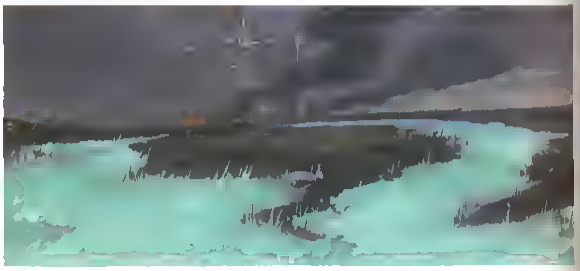
MINAS TIRITH DOCKS
Sketch
Alan Lee
"A view of Minas Tirith from the river, showing the Harlond docks and the battle in full swing. This is for the scene when Aragorn arrives with the Army of the Dead and turns the tide of the battle."



MINAS TIRITH DOCKS
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"Alan did a drawing, quite awhile ago now, of the docks, and all in the distance you could see Minas Tirith more or less in profile, indicative. Those three little color studies look that at a starting point, and were just looks at the color of the environment. A perpetual twilight has fallen on this part of Middle-earth due to the cloud that has come out of Mordor and you can see the lower two tiers of Minas Tirith on fire. Everything's smoking, everything's little depressing. I think the more smoke the better in this environment – it certainly worked well for Aragorn."

ARMY OF THE DEAD ARRIVE AT THE DOCKS
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This study shows the Army of the Dead coming through the fires on the Pelennor on their way to Minas Tirith. It's dawn in Minas Tirith, which had been on fire for some time. The painting was helpful in establishing what the army would look like in this environment."



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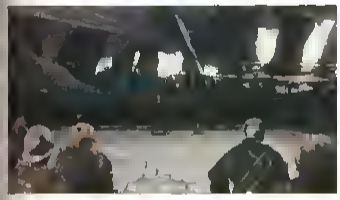
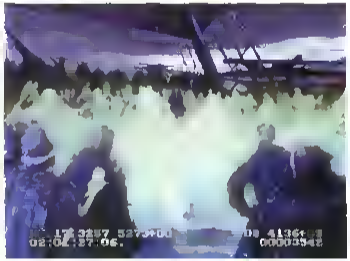
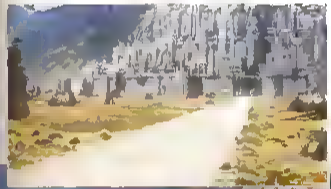
◊ MINAS TIRITH DOCKS
Digital matte painting and precomposite
Ronn Brown
"This was the first shot that I worked on. Taking the fog-action plate (far left) I did a very high-res version of the background (left) – but as you can see from the final composite (below left) not much of this is actually revealed. Also, because the Mordor cloud look wasn't yet established we used Dylan Cole's cloud from an earlier painting. This is just one example of the mountain of work that you will never see on screen."







ARMY OF THE DEAD ARRIVE AT THE DOCKS
Digital artwork composite
Alan Lee
"Aragorn landing at the Minas Tirith docks accompanied by the Army of the Dead. A great deal of thought had been put into the look of the Army of the Dead, as well as how they would move. This is one of the comp contributions that I threw into the melting pot."

◊ THE PELENNOR FIELDS
Digital matte painting and composite
Dylan Cole
"Minas Tirith after the battle. The mountain of the city had to be completely repainted to match the lighting on the fire-action plate. Meanwhile, the road is just a solid color because that is where the plate of Aragorn leading the Army will go. To the left is the rough composite with the army in place."

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THE BLACK GATES

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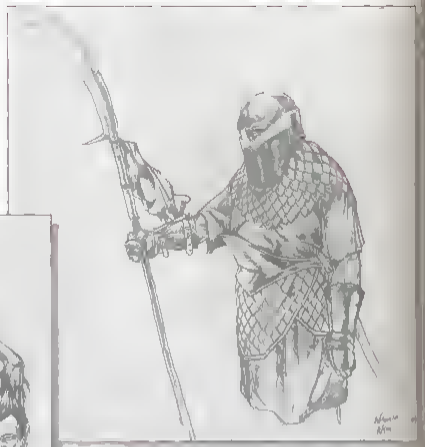
◇◇ ORC ENCAMPMENT
Environment study
Paul Lasaine
"Paul painted this view of the Gorgoroth Plain early on in the project, but when it is compared with the images on pages 174–175, it can be seen that his interpretation of the awesome vista that confronts Frodo and Sam changed very little during the development process. The main differences are that the cool palette used for the plain has been warmed up with the hot reds of the sky above Mount Doom, on the right, and the light reflecting off the rocky path on the left. The final version, seen in Jeremy's painting, is altogether more cooler. Over Paul's, The Black Gates are out of the shot, behind and to the left of the outcrop."



ORC ARMOR
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"These would have been there early on, behind it became apparent where Peter wanted to take the armor design. The left-hand one combines metals and textiles and quite a simple-looking helmet. This Orc has for underneath the metal because among the various materials that we had available to manufacturing the costumes, there was a lot of goat skins. I put for underneath to make it a little more comfortable for the actor to wear, as well. The one above again had a helmet that covered the face completely, looked good, and meant that we could use an actor without needing a prosthetic mask. Much of my early work on the Orc later influenced the Easterlings. I remember I went through some of my old the designs to see if there was anything I could reuse and adapt for there."

◇ ORC
Concept
Ben Wootten
"This is quite an early the design and there are probably some parts of it which you can see in the Orc on screen but there's nothing definite here. It is probably pre-John Gregory we are looking at some fairly dodgy armor concepts, both in form and function."

ORC COMMANDER
Concept
Daniel Falconer
"I was suggested that the lines of Mordor were, on average, a larger breed than we had seen before, with the origins of the brute-like stock hinted at among their ranks. This concept was for a tall and brutish Orc commander.

"There was talk of the Mordor Orcs also having a more defined and regimented culture, no doubt from being under the oppressive influence of Sauron's will and the organisation that came with the government. They are still scavengers and will readily incorporate any trophies or gear they take from opponents, but they also have an imposed order that comes straight the Dark Lord – and maybe some of that order intelligence has rubbed off on them. I imagined the higher-ranking Orcs having a greater level of military savvy."

MORDOR ORC
Concepts
Daniel Falconer
"So much of the time, design is about silhouette. In the case of the Orc, I tried to distort their silhouette and make them less human by raising their shoulders, arching the back, and throwing the head forward and down. A few helmet helps shape the forehead back and make the the appear less intelligent and noble in bearing. I brought the back up by adding a rucksack slung high over the back. The backlike projections on the arms and leg armor were really just to help and menace and, again, differentiate them from other racial silhouettes on the hot defield. In the end, however, so much depends on the posture of the performer on the day. Early on we talked a great deal with the motion coaches, developing ideas together that we would employ in our artwork."

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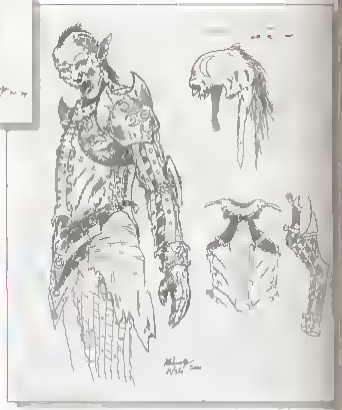
ORC HELMETS
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"There was a big push to do a whole range of Orc helmets quickly so I had a mission to spend a great so so just designing helmets. I wanted them to be practical, so the cross-face one was made, but the one with the pointed snout wasn't – it wasn't practical because the stunt guys would barely see."



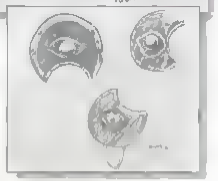
ORC ARMOR
Concept
Warren Mahy
"I am fairly certain that the started life as a concept for Grimhuale as *Two Towers* Grim ended up in quite different armor. This was an illustration knocked off in an afternoon which went straight down to the leather room and was made there and then. I think the orgel have around one of the Orcs that finds Frodo after the Shelob sequence – Peter wanted something that was really menacing because it was going to get a lot of action."

ORC
Face maquette
Mike Asquith
"This formed the basis of what would eventually become the final sculpt for a prosthetic mask to one of the speaking Orcs from Sixth Uruk-hai captures Frodo after he's been bitten by Shelob. Because it is based upon a specific actor's face, no drawings would have been than – Mike worked directly from photographs to the maquette. He would then send Peter Jackson, who in turn would tell Mike what the character was like, and what his persona was like on screen; Mike then created the character from those descriptions. Looking at the sculpt, we can see it is very sharp-faced, so probably quite a fan Orc: sneaky, shady-looking, with a sinister nature. The director would have worked those through with Mike over a period of days, getting a subtlety into the look and the expression he wanted. Then, when the mask is glued onto the actor's face, Peter gets a wicked amusement out of the mask, and a very individual look."

ORC ARMOR
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"Looking back at these drawings now, I'm amazed how far I've come. This may be one of the very first things I did! I was just going for it, but it's not as loose as it should be – I didn't developed the ability to open up, because I was worried about producing good stuff – I was going to do an illustration rather than a design. But I enjoyed going it.
"There are bound very different designs. Some fine of an Orc look and look here very different helmets. Because, as I said earlier, if you've got a full-face helmet you don't need to make a mask so we could fill out the masses with helmets rather than requiring prosthetics for each individual actor."

ORC ARMOR
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"The guy over here, based upon the helmet goes from over the top so he could either wear it or not. They actually made the model in plastic, but it just wasn't practical on set. Around it was so big and fitted only a certain size person! I really like the fact that his body armor hid his arms and legs: he's, so he's probably not terribly intelligent."

ORC DRUM
Prop design
Three Feet Six Art Department
"We made a few of these: fully functional, although probably not suitable for a symphony orchestra! Made from skin, with a leather banding, they were then dressed up to look massive."



ORC SHIELDS
Concepts
Warren Mahy
"A crescent moon and the Eye symbol, iconic shapes we used so you can tell who's who on the battlefield. There were factions of them – the crescent moon represented the Minas Morgul gang because of its former title, Tower of the Moon, and the Eye was obviously for the Mordor lines. Just aggressive shapes, without adding big spikes."

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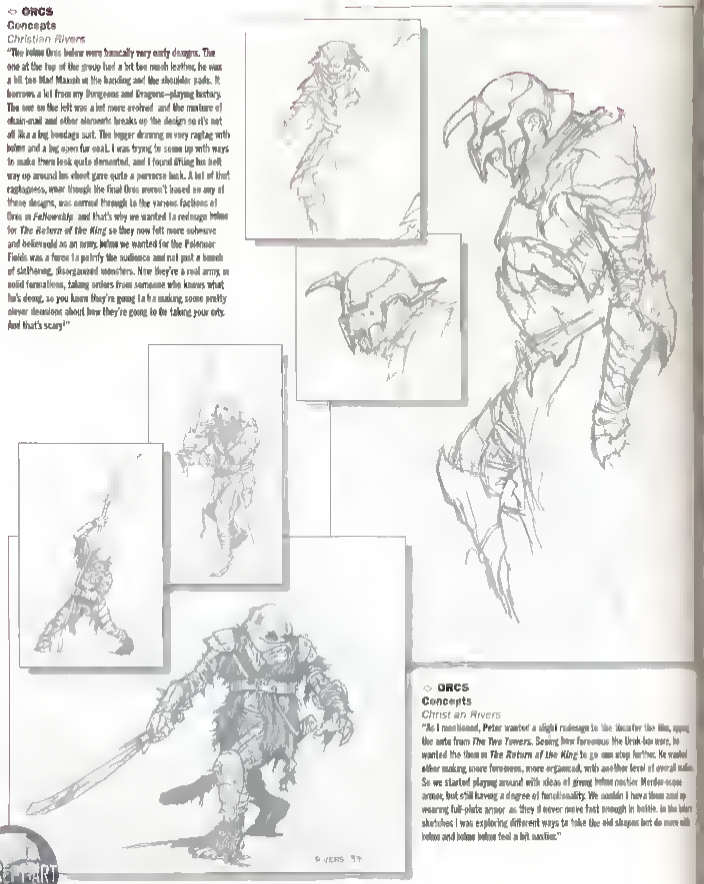
ORCS
Concepts
Christian Rivers

"The bolton Orcs below were basically very early designs. The one at the top of the group had a bit too much leather, he was a bit too Mad Maxish at the hanging and the shoulder pads. It borrows a lot from my Dungeons and Dragons–playing history. The one on the left was a lot more evolved and the mixture of chain-mail and other elements breaks up the design so it's not all like a big bondage suit. The bigger drawing is very ragtag with bolton and a big open fur coat. I was trying to come up with ways to make them look quite demented, and I found diving his belt way up around his chest gave quite a perverse look. A lot of that raggedness, wear through the final Orcs weren't based on any of these designs, was carried through to the various factions of Orcs in *Fellowship* and that's why we wanted to redesign bolton for *The Return of the King* so they now felt more cohesive and believable as an army. bolton we wanted for the Pelennor Fields was a force to pulverize the audience and not just a bunch of slitherings, disorganized monsters. Now they're a real army, in solid formations, taking orders from someone who knows what he's doing, so you know they're going to be making some pretty clever decisions about how they're going to do taking your orts. And that's scary!"



ORCS
Concepts
Christian Rivers

"As I mentioned, Peter wanted a slight redesign to the Uruk-hai in the movie the film, upping the ante from *The Two Towers*. Seeing how fierceness the Uruk-hai were, he wanted the them in *The Return of the King* to go one step further. He wanted other making more fierceness, more organized, with another level of overall malice. So we started playing around with ideas of giving bolton cooler Mordor-scope armor, but still having a degree of functionality. We couldn't have them end up wearing full-plate armor as they'd never move fast enough in battle. In the later sketches I was exploring different ways to take the old shapes but do more with bolton and bolton bolton feel a lot nastier."

SAM AND FRODO AS ORCS
Concepts
Karen Mahy

"Time were good fun. The brief that I can remember was that we could design Orc armor especially for them, but they still had to be able to them them faces. They needed to wear bolton but you wouldn't still see it was Sam or Frodo. And it had to look the big on them. So I opted to use furred leggings, something that they would take off quite quickly before carrying on. We were also thinking of other-mail tops were over their underguarments, so real bolton underguarments with fur breeches that they could put on as leggings. Then bolton were things worn over the top like a bolton or a bag. Thick fur belt, and bolton is designed specifically for them."

SAM'S ORC HELMET
Concept
Daniel Falconer

"Sam and Frodo don Orc disguises in Mordor to hide bolton from unfriendly eyes. This was an interesting design brief because the bolton had to be open to other for the actors bolton to be seen enough for bolton to be able to impart bolton and act, but at the same time also be concealing enough for audiences to swallow the fact that they were convincingly disguised. As an aside, given that so many of the Orcs have large ears, I included specially constructed ear-guards bolted to the factions sides."

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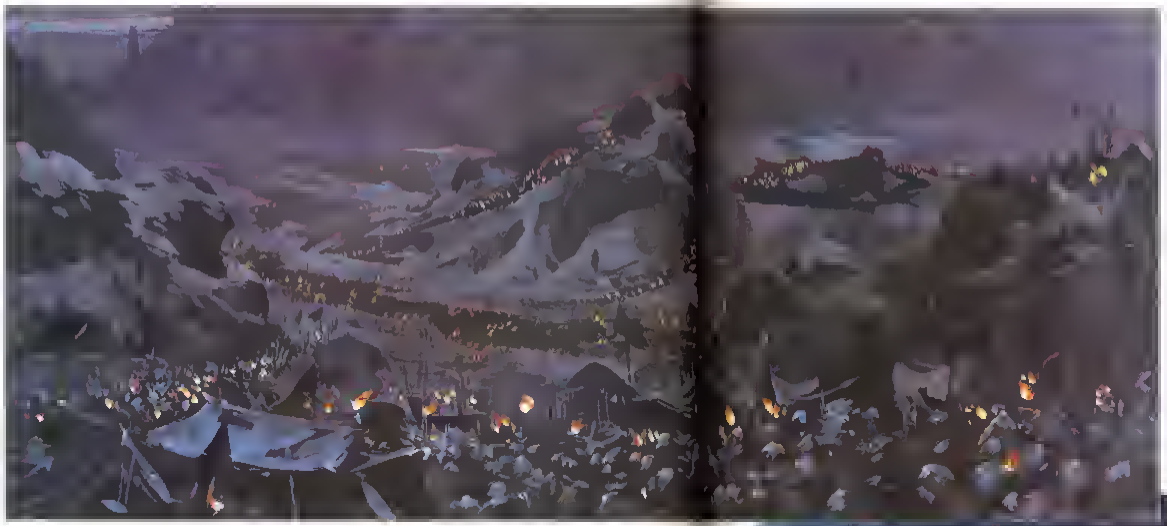
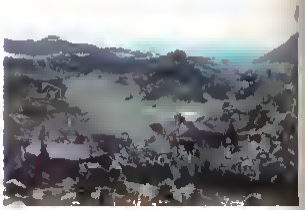
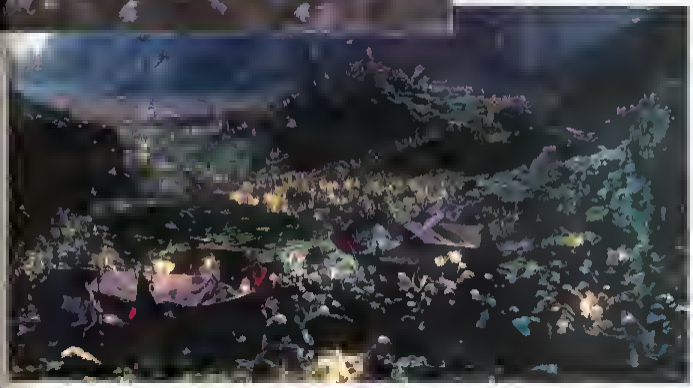


ORC ENCAMPMENT
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is the last frame of a scene where you see Sam and Frodo dressed up as Orcs. Up in the top left-hand corner you've got the Black Gates, and Mount Doom would be over to the right. When our heroes leave the Cirith Ungol tower, and bump into some Orcs, they get rounded up and sent off to war. I did this as a color study for the matte painters, and if you compare the to the similar one of Paul Lasaine's that opens this section, you'll see that ultimately we went for a very cool palette."

THE BLACK GATES
Sketch
John Howe
"Orc encampments. We imagined that even Orcs would want to escape the foul weather generated by the local volcano. Crude standards bearing the Red Eye are ready to be carried into battle."

ORC ENCAMPMENT
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"In the right is an establishing sort of the Orc hordes as they troop off toward battle. It was originally a day shot—as shown in the live-action plate below—but had to be heavily graded to provide the Murder feel. The painting starts just toward the rediground hill and looks at the vastness and ugliness of the Gorgoroth Plain, and in so doing sets the scene for Frodo and Sam as they embrace Orcs journey toward Mount Doom."





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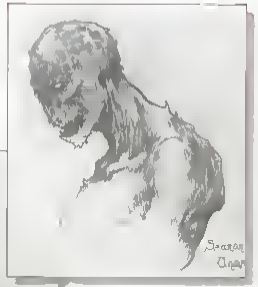
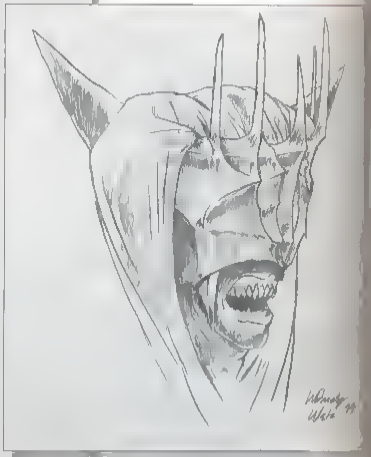
SAURON ◊
Concept
Warren Mahy

"I came in one weekend to do something else, and ended up drawing this. At the time I was designing Saurons armor and I was envisaging that at one point we might look down from the ramparts of Barad-dur and see the figure moving through it, with its minions moving around it. I guess the was the could form of what Sauron used to be. At this time we weren't sure who/ber Sauron was going to appear or how he was going to work, so I was just thinking of his physical form. This was just my brain playing around, having the"

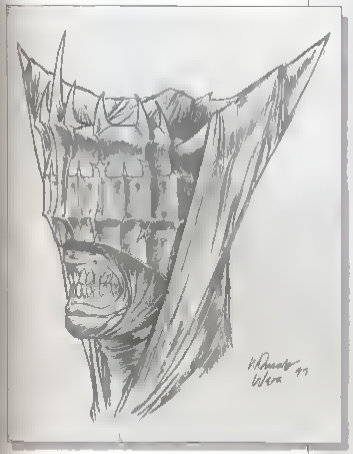


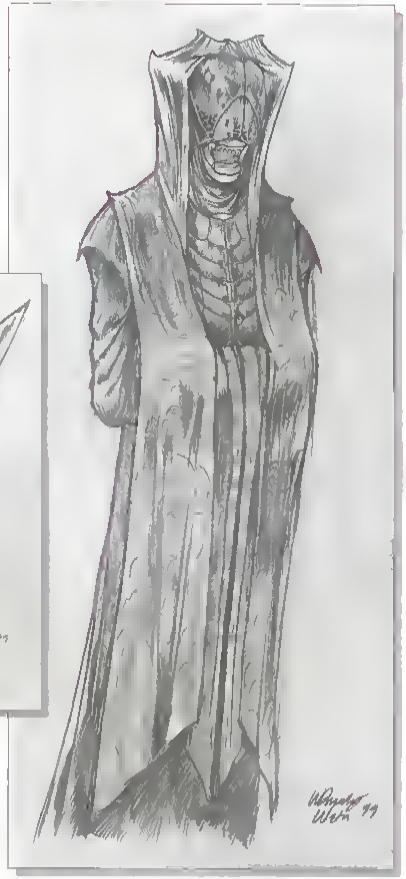


MOUTH OF SAURON
Concepts
Warren Mahy

"The idea was that the Mouth of Sauron was purely that, just the mouth. He couldn't run – well, maybe he could with his mind – but the body was just a tool. There was no idea it was stage, I think it could be the one far right, where parts of his helmet totally hooked into his mouth to keep it open as well, or pulled it back into a pinace. But it didn't work out that way because the actor who plays the Mouth would have limited mouth movement.

"Prior time the idea that the robe flowed up onto the helmet, providing horn shapes out of the sides. I like the way it gives the an helmet religious, pontiffs look. This would maybe carry on to his horse as well; when he's sitting on it, in robes are covering the horse as an inquisitor would. It was all about power."





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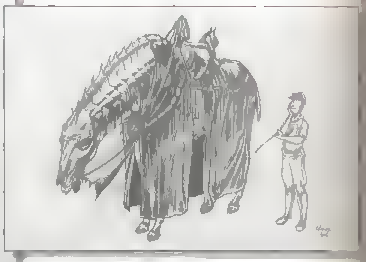
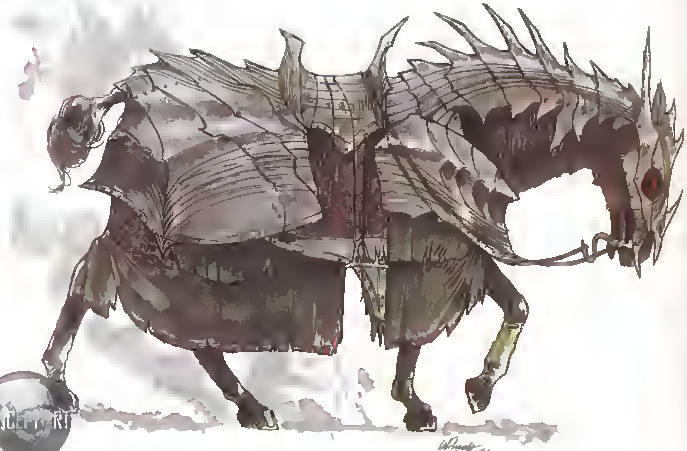


MOUTH OF SAURON'S HORSE
Concepts
Warren Mahy

"The brief was to get a Mordor feel into it, and as I said before, bring the Mouth of Sauron down to the horse, so the two of them melded together.

"The above sketch was my original design, and that developed into the one above left – talk about the horse having a skull for a face! I liked that idea. Obviously the skull comes from the armor rather than the actual face of the horse itself, although it might actually be the horse – we just can't tell. If you thought the Ringwraith horses were mean, this animal is past that point!

"The large color picture is to show how the Mouth of Sauron's cloak would affix itself to the armor. The animal is really quite heavily armored, but this is for status rather than protection."



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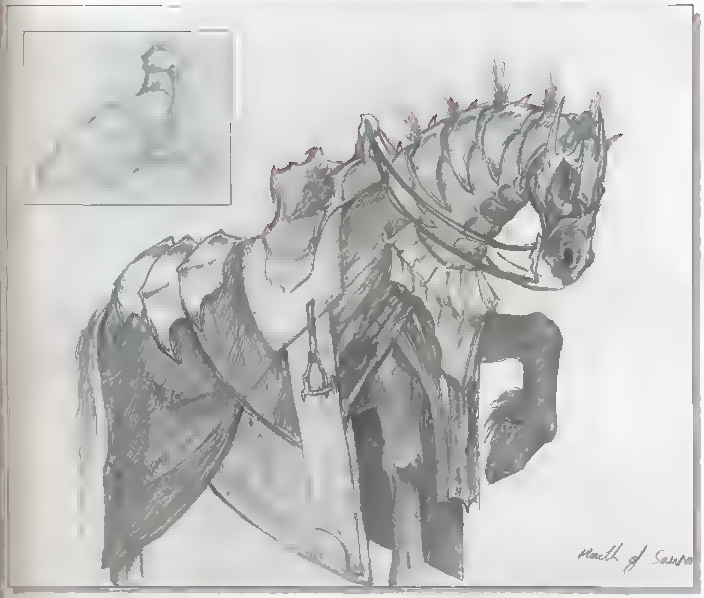

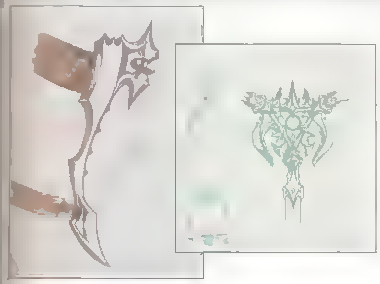

MOUTH OF SAURON'S HORSE
Concept
Ben Wootten

"The armor components in this drawing are simpler than they ended up being in the final design. There was more scalloping and flicking, and we had the same etched patterns we saw in a lot of the Ringwraith armor. Sam it's clearly a Mordor design. It's for the Mouth of Sauron, so it's an ornate, beautiful piece of work, even if the aesthetic is not pleasant. And the horse is not a normal horse, it's hunted and dark, so it would carry this armor without any worry or fear."

MOUTH OF SAURON'S HORSE
Prop designs
Three Foot Six Art Department

"We were looking for ugly things that you could put on a horse which wouldn't be that pleasant. Of course, the horse would do exactly what it was told to, but it wouldn't necessarily be the most humane way of treating it. Everything is spiked and dangerous and nasty. On the far left is the bit for its mouth, the stirrup and peytral on the near left. The spurs are meant at the top, and again are heavily spiked, so that if the horse regularly got kicked by them, it would leave quite a few scars."

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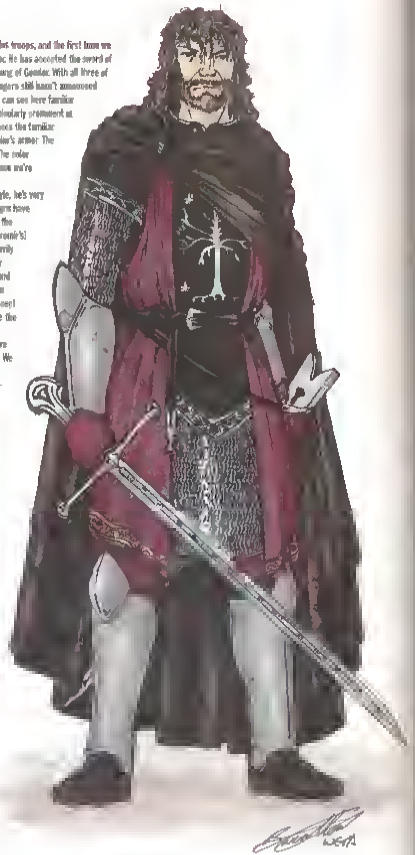
ARAGORN AT THE BLACK GATES
Concepts
Ben Wootten

"This is the first time that Aragorn is seen as the lone commander of his troops, and the first time we recognize him not just as a heroic figure but as the sovereign of Gondor. He has accepted the sword of his ancestors earlier in the film, and now he's begun to dress like the king of Gondor. With all three of Boom illustrations we can see the tree symbol but not the armor – Aragorn still hasn't announced himself as the king, so it's just the seven stars and the White Tree. We can see here familiar imagery from Elendil and Isildur's armor from the Second Age. It's particularly prominent in the picture opposite where we can see in the gauntlet and the vambraces the familiar wing flaring and almost spearhead-shaped design from Elendil and Isildur's armor. The brooch holding his cloak on is the same shape and design as Elendil's. The color red is also a color we see Elendil and Isildur wearing. So it's the first time we're beginning to see Aragorn as the man he's going to become.

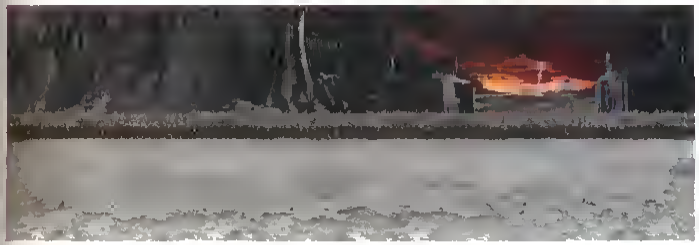
"In the end we kept the armor light. Viggo has an active fighting style, he's very heroic on screen, and heavier armor would not and has, so these designs have varying degrees of armor to them. The one below is a light armor; and the vambraces are leather, very similar to Boromir's – in fact, they are Boromir's! Aragorn still wears them in tribute to him. On the right, where he's heavily armored, the vambraces and gauntlets are very simple – they're regular Gondorian troop armor. The one on the next page is the most ornate and elegant of the ancestral armor, and although it's not the armor Aragorn might choose. It's the armor he ends up wearing. He's beginning to accept the mantle of responsibility and to acknowledge that he does not have the same free choice that he had before.

"Of course, we were working with Mythic's team on this, so there were changes in the cut of the fabric that resulted in changes to the armor. We came to a really nice balance in the end; there's maybe more of an angle in some of the cuts, but it's pretty close. The colors, the construction and the feel of it is pretty close to the end result."



THE LAST BATTLE
Digital matte painting and composite
Ronn Brown

"This POV shot was done for Aragorn's last stand against the overwhelming might of Sauron's army, where we see 200,000 Orcs charging out of the Black Gates – Barad-dur and Mount Doom can be seen in the distance. Below is the original live plate filmed on location, and in the middle is a composite with the matte painting in place behind the monsters of the Gates. At the bottom is a version that we produced for the trailer, which has a temporary MASSIVE of the Orc army. At the time, the area behind the gates was still being defined, but a new sequence of shots has come some so, so we will be revising this look for what you see in the movie."



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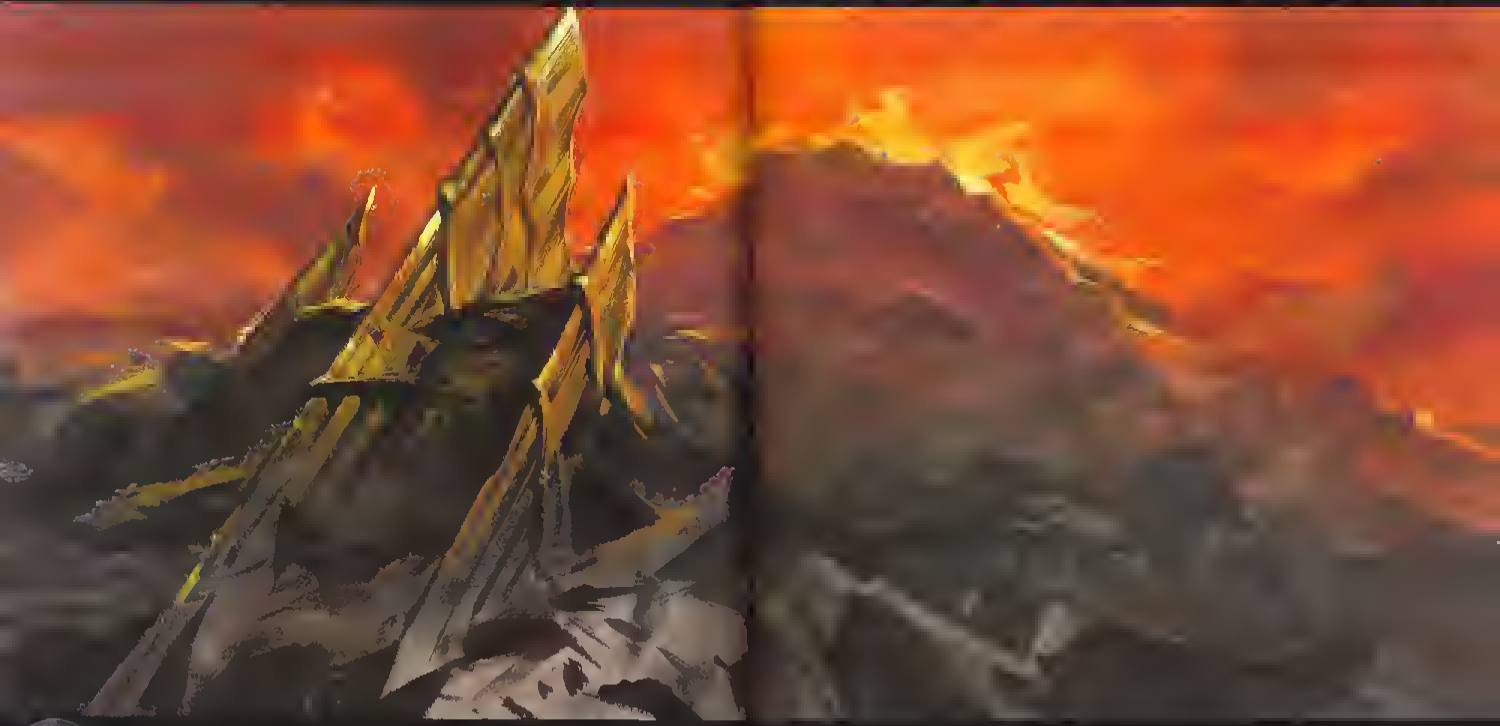
MORDOR



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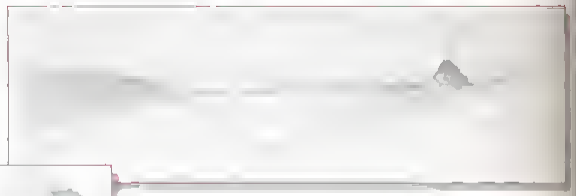
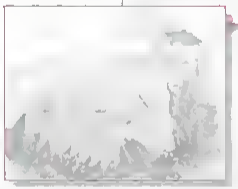
◇ MOUNT DOOM
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is quite a rough study showing the composition for the end frame of the lift-up from Sammath Naur to the peak of Mount Doom. The painting is very loose but was helpful in getting PJ to sign off on the final composition."

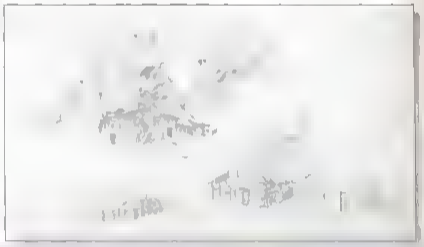




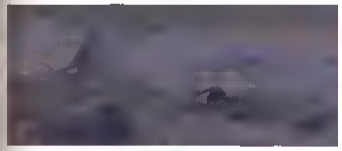
◇ MORRAR
Sketch
John Howe
"Frodo's first glimpse of the plain of Gorgoroth, with smoke from the countless fires of Sauron's encamped hordes rising to form a pall that covers all Mordor, above which rise only Barad-dûr and Mount Doom."

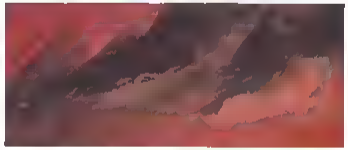
◇ MORROR
Sketch
John Howe
"One of the hardest tasks in Middle-earth was actually pinning down the scale of things. This is an eagle's-eye view of Mordor, looking east, laying out its key landmarks from the Cirith Ungol, via Mount Doom and the Black Tower, to the plateau of Gorgoroth.

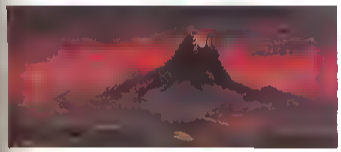
◇ MORDOR
Sketch
John Howe
"Orcish barracks, factories, foundries and armories."



◇ MOUNT DOOM
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"A very quick study of a generic Mount Doom vista. I wanted to come up with as cool a palette as possible, so I could present this to Peter with a number of other paintings to get him to tell us what type of color palette he would imagine. For example, should we start cool and introduce the saturated oranges and reds as we go, so that by the time we get to Sammath Naur and the Crack of Doom, everything is blood red and boiling hot?"



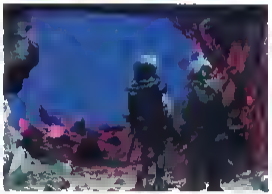


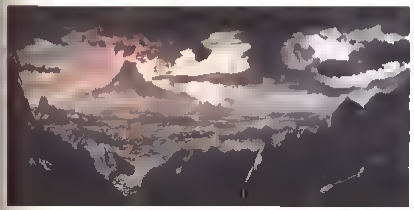


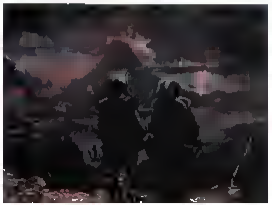
◇ MORDOR THROUGH THE AGES
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"These go back a long way. These were five very quick studies going some thought to the palette of Mordor, starting from maybe a thousand years previously, and moving right up to now. Originally, I was going to take them a bit further, but I guess I just never got around to it."

◇ GORGOROTH PLAIN
Digital matte painting and composite
Peter Hyatt
"Far among the Orc dugouts, Frodo and Sam are confronted by the view of Mordor in all its terrifying glory. Thousands of Boul carrying burning torches swarm across the landscape, and dominating all is the towering volcano of Mount Doom: Boul Boul destination. Following the painting overleaf by Jeremy Bennett, the actors were filmed on a blue-screen miniature set; later, many of the rocks to their right and in front of them were removed to reveal more of the main position, below right.

"Pete was closely monitoring the realization of the Mordor miniature, and the composition changed as the editing neared. In addition to blood movement and smoke plumes, 'noise' from the flickering Orc torches and volcanic eruption was inserted as part of the painting. The painting below is a proof and not the lightning flashes switched to the 'a' position, in order to locate them for the compositors who would add all animation to this proof."







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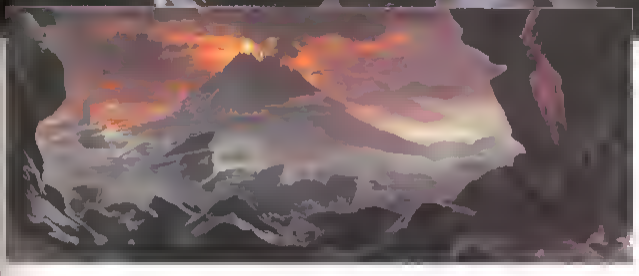

FIRST SIGHT OF MOUNT DOOM
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"This is Sam and Frodo's first view down into Mordor. The original brief was to give Peter a vista rather similar to the final shot of *The Two Towers*, Doom this illustration. But after seeing that, we decided we would alter it slightly: the result being the picture to the right, where we placed Mount Doom left of centre, making it quite a prominent feature. Now you can see Barad-dur off to the left-hand side, and we can see a lot more of the broken ground ahead of us out in the midground: just to give more of a feeling of desolation – in terms of both the landscape and the hobbits' where they can see where they want to go, but this is what they've got to traverse before they get there."

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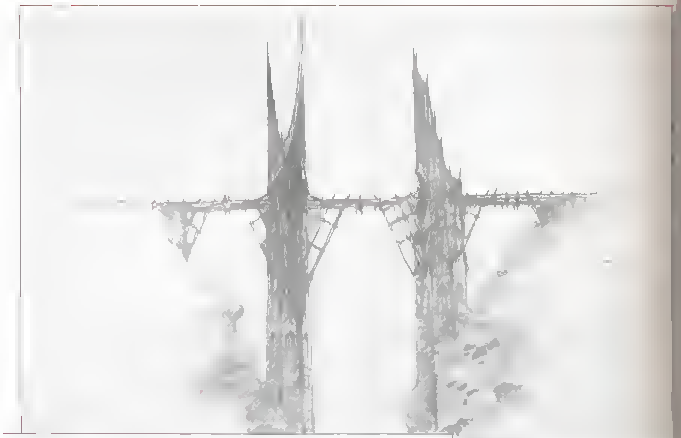

MORDOR
Sketches
John Howe
"These are all ideas for bridges and viaducts in Mordor. Of all the architects of Middle-earth, Sauron is the most modern using metal most extensively. With the climate being what it is, Mordor is therefore a harvest rust."

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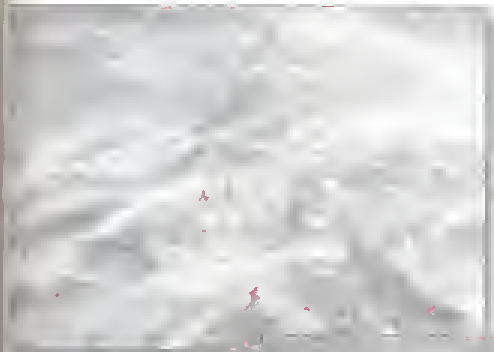
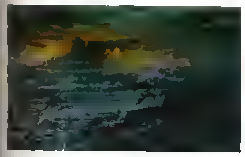


MORDOR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is a drawing I did quite some time ago of Sam and Frodo trekking across Mordor toward Mount Doom. It was based on a location shot, and I was just seeing what we based next to add to it to make it into a more dramatic environment. Paul Lizamo and Jeremy have done quite a lot of work on this environment as well – in fact, everyone has had a go at it. One of the features that does keep coming up is the steaming vents from a bubbling lake of lava that lies just beneath the surface, which we see through cracks. You feel the whole landscape is very incubatorial and ready to go off at any time, which of course it will do at the end of the film."

MORDOR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"View of Mount Doom from Barad-dûr, showing the canal, along which lava will flow. This was done as a matte painting by Brian Sewell [below] to go behind a shot of the miniature of the top of the mountain itself."



MOUNT DOOM
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is one of the many drawings, paintings and digital paintings that have been done to try to get the right look for the setting for the climax in *The Return of the King*, and of the whole trilogy. I sculpted a small maquette, which I presented to Peter like a birthday cake at the set of Helm's Deep, while which a hundred puzzled extras watched. That formed the basis for the miniature Jerry Wells built, but it is probably going to be the most difficult of all our miniatures to pull off successfully, and the finished result will be a combination of every digital and practical technique available."

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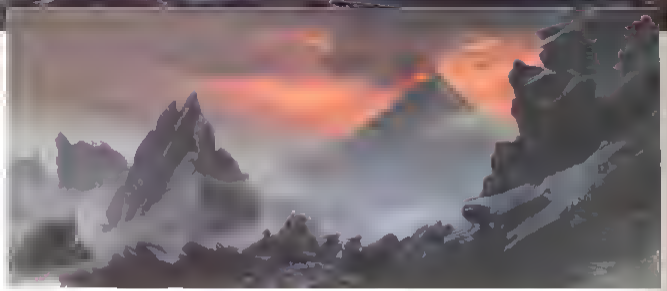
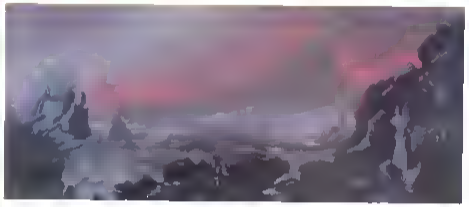
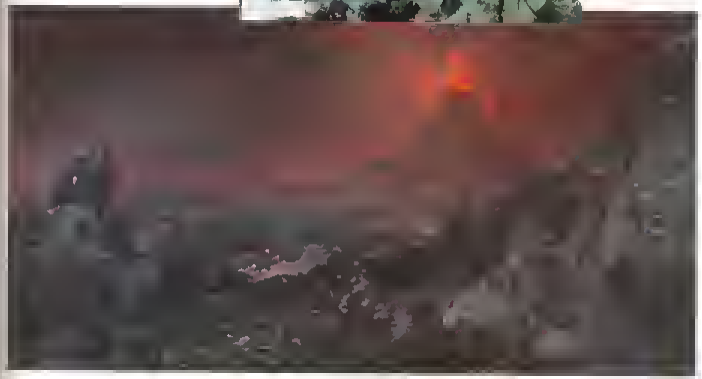


MOUNT DOOM
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"In these two paintings, we are looking up at Mount Doom, so the horizon line is quite low in the one above. I've introduced more quite large, quite aggressive rock shapes into the environment, with the idea that they look a lot different from the Emyn Muil – you would certainly know that you are in Mordor. I wanted it to look quite windswept, quite cold, quite dark, and I wanted the palette to be very cool. At this stage I've pushed Mount Doom away by removing all detail from the lower slopes. In the larger picture, we're [illegible] I've just indicated what I think we should be seeing beyond the horizon line: more rock shapes, which I wanted to push [illegible] away and from out with atmosphere, adding some cracks in the ground through which we see the glow of lava – something [illegible] is very fond of."



GORGOROTH PLAIN
Environment study
Jeremy Bennett
"This was possibly the third painting done for this shot. It was helpful in establishing the overall color palette for the scene. But it the more changed again, and the final painting by Dylan is different again from the one below. The result, however, was worth the wait."

GORGOROTH PLAIN
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This shot went through many revisions, and we eventually ended up with a much more simplified view of the Gorgoroth Plains. This was so that we could establish both the desolation and the sin Lance yet to be covered."



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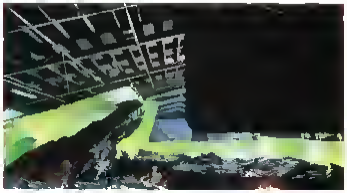
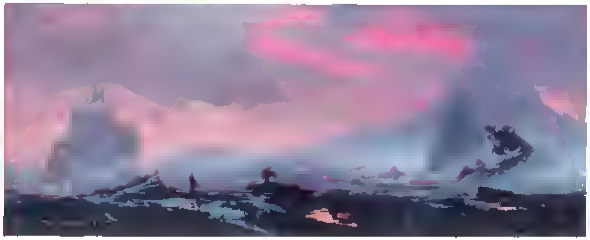
GORGOROTH PLAIN
Digital matte painting and composite
Max Dennison
"This painting portrays the plight of Frodo and Sam as they struggle toward Mount Doom. The Eye of Sauron at the top of Barad-dûr in the distance is scanning and illuminating the landscape, looking for the two hobbits. The painting had to convey both the spiteness and majesty of the landscape and the demanding slopes of the volcano."





GORGOROTH PLAIN
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett
"Two of a series of studies depicting the Gorgoroth plain. I imagine Gorgoroth to be a series of cracked and shattered rocky plates filtered with grotesque rocky outcrops. These were found at Breaker Bay, on the south shoreline of Wellington."

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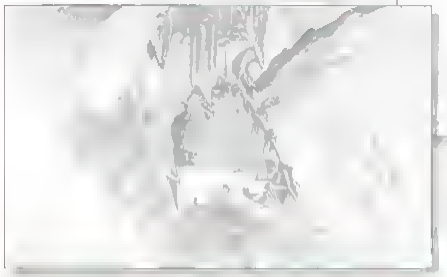
MOUNT DOOM
Sketches
John Howe
"The sketches on this page are all various attempts to depict Sammath Naur, the entrance to the Crack of Doom. Peter wanted MUCH more than just a hole in a mountainside."



SAMMATH NAUR
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This is a view of the top of Mount Doom from the doorway at Sammath Naur. Sam has just followed Frodo into the Crack of Doom. It was a terrific challenge to paint the underside of a pyroclastic cloud."

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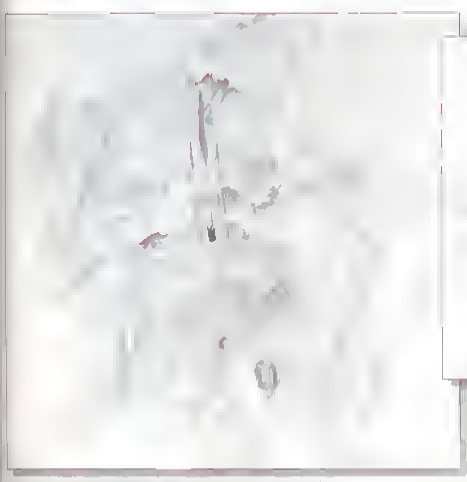
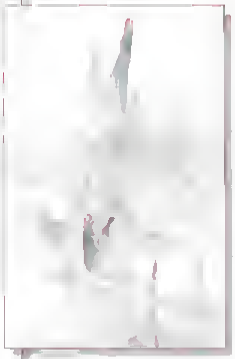
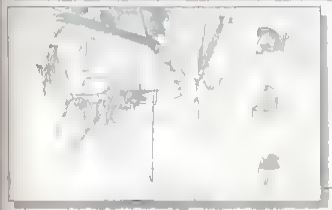




MORDOR
Sketches
John Howe
"And of course were made. Peter wanted MUCH MUCH more than just a crack in the rock, lit from below. Rather than a vague pool of lava, Peter wanted a river of it flowing through the entrance of Mount Doom. The stalactites jutting out of the walls and roof made worst fire as the lava rose in the upheaval following Gollum's fall. The interior of the entrance is reminiscent of Barad-dûr, with all the decaying machinery — rings and wheels and levers — symbolizing the workings of Sauron's mind."



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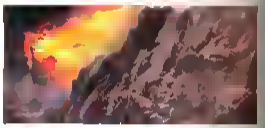
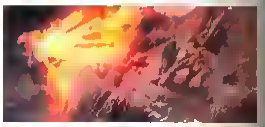
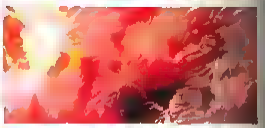
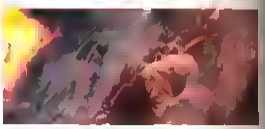
MOUNT DOOM
Digital artwork
Gus Hunter
"Below is one of several concepts that I did that were done to show what the Barad-dûr searchlight would look like as it scans the Gorgoroth Plain, hunting for Frodo and Sam. For the version below, I imagined that the Eye would send out a pulse that became a tunnel of light sweeping across the landscape."





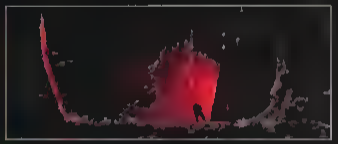


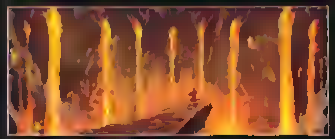


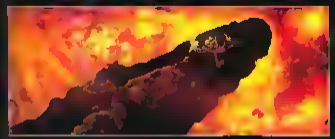
MOUNT DOOM
Digital artwork
Gus Hunter
"Above is an alternate version of the Barad-dûr searchlight, and in this one the light is concentrated into a more intense beam of energy. The third from suggests that as the Eye points directly at you it looms out, as if running for its quarry. As with the sequence to the left, Frodo and Sam can be seen hiding on the slope of Mount Doom."

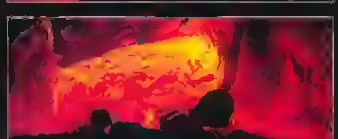
THE CRACK OF DOOM
Colour studies and digital artwork
Gus Hunter
"These studies were to show the inside of the Mount Doom environment. I was trying to give Peter some options regarding atmosphere, lava and colour palettes. The two studies in the middle of the left-hand column show Gollum at the moment of the triumph, holding the Ring aloft, and below it a composite that incorporates a live action plate of Frodo hanging from the mountain.

"The column on the right is a sequence that shows the two hobbits fleeing the lava that is erupting out of the Crack of Doom."









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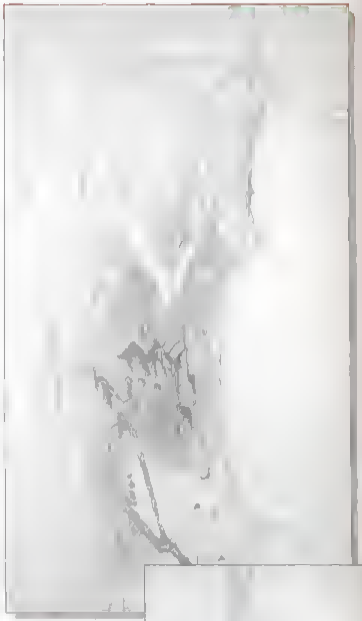
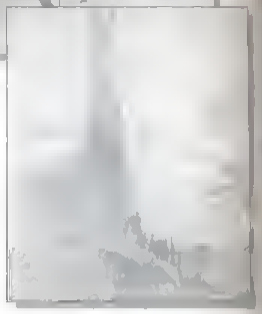
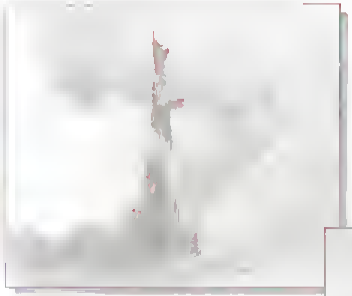




BARAD-DÛR
Sketches
John Howe
"The Dark Tower is beyond architecture. As the physical envelope of Sauron in Middle-earth, it can obey laws beyond the strictly architectural. I see it very much as an extension of his soul. If his mind could take shape, then it would be a hideously tall tower such as this."



BARAD-DÛR
Sketch
Alan Lee
"I did this when we were just starting to think about the way that Barad-dûr would destruct. I thought it would be nice if as it starts to fall apart, we caught glimpses of the interior. This might happen, although we may have to have some extra miniature bits built would reveal very, very briefly the labyrinthine dungeon and all the interiors we wouldn't otherwise see."

BARAD-DÛR
Sketch
John Howe
"The top of Barad-dûr, with the viewing gallery at the base of the two horns. At a height of a thousand yards or more, the view would be extraordinary, especially if you had great eyesight..."

BARAD-DÛR
Digital artwork
Alan Lee
"Gray Nesfield at Weta digital jumped at the chance to construct, and then destroy, Barad-dûr and the surrounding environment. A digital version of the miniature was painstakingly built while Gray spent the best part of a year writing the codes that would bring it down. I had the thought that it might be destroyed, along with Mordor and the Black Gate, in the course of one long camera move, but wear neutral prevailed."

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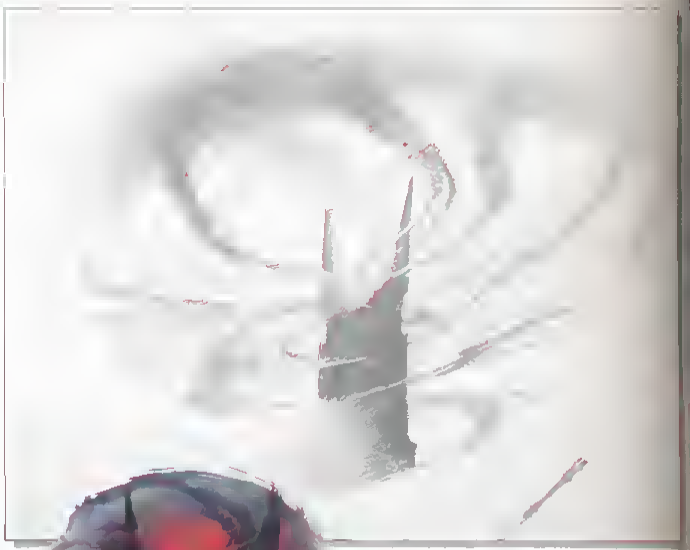
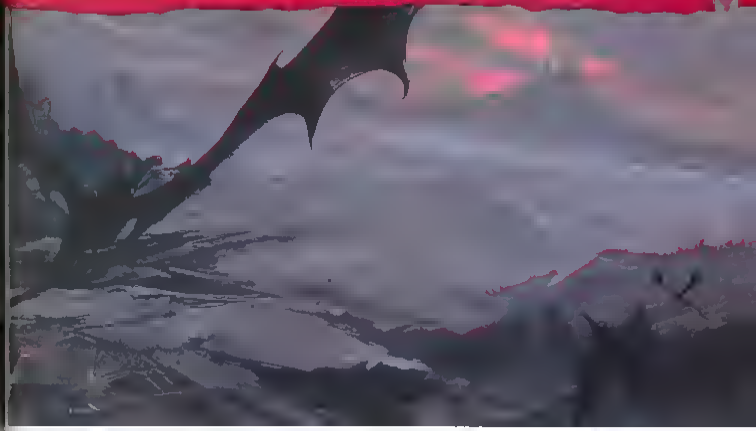


MORDOR
Sketches and watercolor
John Howe
"Some early attempts at the Red Eye. The power of Sauron is such that he warps the mists and clouds that shroud the summit of Barad-dûr with the ironscan pupil that is his window on the world."



BARAD-DÛR
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"Frodo has just put on the Ring inside the Crack of Doom, alerting Sauron and the Nazgûl to its location. Meanwhile, the battle outside the Black Gate is in full swing. This is the last frame of quite an elaborate shot starting outside the Black Gate and panning with the left beast to Mount Doom."

MOUNT DOOM
Watercolor
John Howe
"One of only a handful of watercolors that I did for the project. What started as something that established the proximity and relationship between Barad-dûr and Mount Doom, felicit as they were by the fiery chasm of Orodruin, developed to include full beasts in flight. As they are all pointing in the same direction, I suspect that they have just been dispatched on an errand by their master, perhaps their descent and frantic flight toward Sammath Naur, when Frodo slams the Ring on the very brink of the Cracks of Doom."

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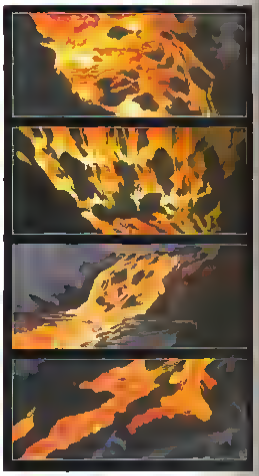
LAVA FLOWS
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett

"Quite old studies of Mount Doom exploding, a look at the color palette you might see off on the horizon. The initial feedback was that these had a very Mount St. Helens look, and I don't think Peter or anyone else really imagined Mount Doom blowing its top to that degree. But they were kind of fun to do. For the one at the bottom, we were toying with the idea of having Mount Doom directly connected to the destruction of Barad-dûr so that the explosion of Mount Doom would send a pulse through the lava look that would then be felt in the moat around the lower slopes of the tower, contributing to its destruction with geysers of fire shooting flame right would just high. The destruction of Barad-dûr has come a long way look this—the really is one of the earliest ideas.

"The four lava studies were a starting point for further discussion. I like the top and bottom ones in particular, because you've got a really cool palette next to a very warm palette and looking at the lava reference material we had, it's actually very common. You would imagine these environments to be predominantly hot color palettes, but in fact we found that lava rocks and surrounding atmosphere to have a very cool look to them."



MOUNT DOOM
Sketch
Alan Lee

"My take on Mount Doom, showing the lava flowing down it."

BARAD-DÛR
Color study
Jeremy Bennett

"This would be one of the ideas we looked at where we would bring down Barad-dûr completely destroying it! Just imagine the lava pulse coming from Mount Doom, surging along the canal and causing a reaction that would push the lava right up into the tower to the point where it would start overflowing and spilling back down, rather like a cascade. A very old idea, but we wanted to color a look at it, just to see how it might look."

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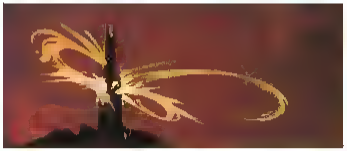

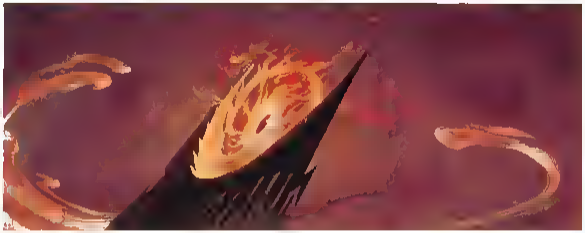

BARAD-DÛR
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett

"In the top frame, you're at ground level, as the lava pulse surges past you. Flames hundreds of feet high, just churning along the canal until they slam into the base of Barad-dûr, creating this awesome effect. I imagined that it set off a reaction inside the tower, where the latent energy might be released, expelled from the tower a half mile or so out, rather like a solar flare — that was the analogy. Then the energy of the shock wave would get to the point where it couldn't go any farther and would just be sucked back into [illegible] creating an incredible explosion as it smashed back into it. Bear in mind that Barad-dûr is a mile high: those explosions [illegible] and would just continue to release and draw back the energy over and over again, ripping the tower apart. In the final [illegible] energy is moving up the tower and eventually just crashes into the horns at the top and possibly extinguishes the Eye of [illegible] we are moved as a long way away from them."

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THE UNMAKING OF THE RING
Color studies
Jeremy Bennett

"We used to have think-tank meetings on a Wednesday night. The attendees included Alan Lee, Richard Taylor, Mark Stetson, Paul Lasaine, Christian Rivers, Con Hunter, Rick Porras, Grant Major and myself, among others. Every week we would cover a different topic. One time it was the destruction of the Ring, and quite often after these meetings I would go over the notes and ideas and just turn them into little montages like this that I might then present the following week and we discuss them. I was thinking, do the letters appear on the Ring as it's falling? Is it something we see? At what point does Gollum let the lava? Is the Ring still hanging in mid-air for a few frames before it then follows him in? What happens after Gollum has disappeared beneath the lava? Would the Ring sit on the surface for a little while? What happens to the lettering now? When it melts, what is left? If the blood of Sauron is in that lettering, is that the last thing left of the Ring, the blackness, Sauron's nodents, just spreading away very, very quickly? Just little questions like this."

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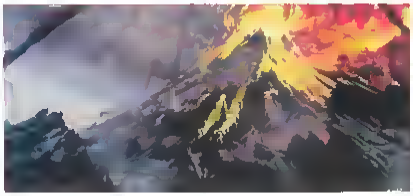
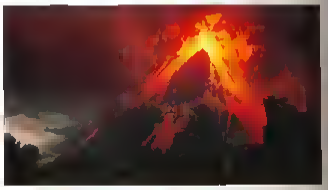


MOUNT DOOM
Environment study
Jeremy Bennett
"This study represents the greatest amount of destruction we'll see on Mount Doom. The lads at this stage have nowhere to run and will have to weather the firestorm."



MOUNT DOOM
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"The Ring has just fallen into the fires of the Crack of Doom, and Frodo and Sam are stranded on a rock. This shows the death throes of Mount Doom as it is being destroyed from within. It was a cool challenge to make something this over the top look convincing."

MOUNT DOOM
Environment study
Jeremy Bennett
"Here are six sketches that give some thought to Frodo and Sam's position on Mount Doom in relation to the lava flow and slopes behind them. These were handed to the Miniatures Department that was sculpting the practical lava for the film, and were used as a guide for the compositors who pieced everything together."

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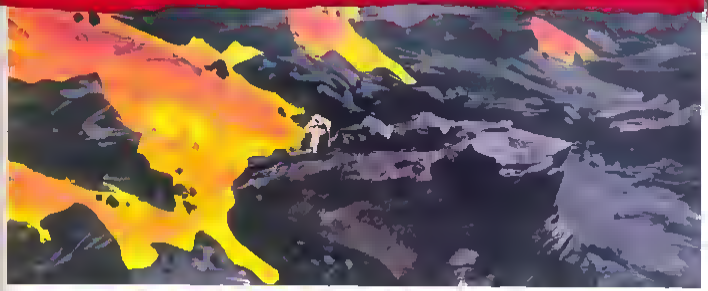
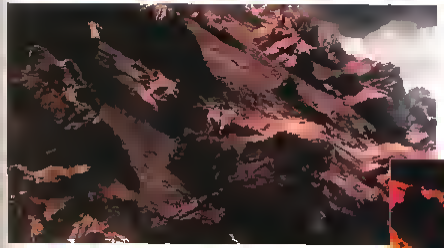
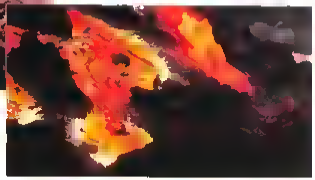
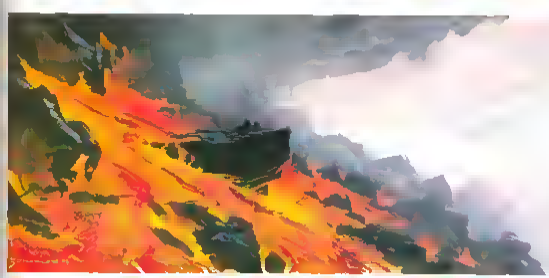


MOUNT DOOM
Environment study
Jeremy Bennett
"This sketch shows the lads climbing on the rock after they exit from Sammath Naur, moments before the slope is inundated in lava. This is one of my favorite studies."





MOUNT DOOM
Digital matte painting and composite
Dylan Cole and Chris Burns
"Frodo and Sam are stranded on the slopes of Mount Doom as the lava flows around them. The behind are already composited into the painting, left. Above is a work-in-progress composite by Chris with the lava markers in place, together with lava breaks."



MOUNT DOOM
Color study
Jeremy Bennett
"This is a more developed look at the last shot of the sequence where Gandalf arrives, riding Shadowfax, to rescue the hobbits. It was more a study of the sky and the hellish look of Gwaihir than of the lava. An earlier painting by John Howe was definitely an influence for this piece."

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EPILOGUE

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THE GRAY HAVENS
Color study
Paul Lasaine

"The early painting of one of the Elven ships sailing to depart into the West, carrying the Keepers of the Rings, elegantly captures the stillness, romanticism and ethereal beauty of Grey Havens. The golden light speaks both of the setting sun and of the peace sailing for Elrond, Galadriel, Gandalf, Bilbo and especially Frodo in the Undying Lands."

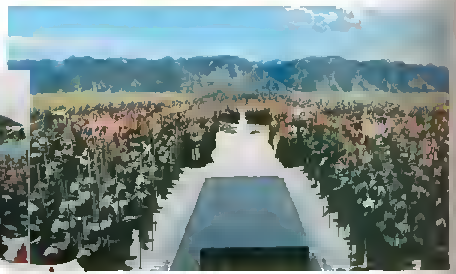
ARWEN'S CORONATION GOWN
Costume design
Nalia Dickson

"Fran and Peter had asked that the ceremonies given be green, to represent new beginnings. So for the dye house it was the beginning of a long search for that perfect green. It had to suit Liv, while not being too bright or too dark. The fabric is silk velvet, the signature fabric for Arwen. The neckline and sleeve decoration is heavily beaded silk, overlyed, and then over-beaded again to give rather design detail – all in silver. The underslevee is silk moussoline dyed a soft lemon. Somehow the lemon added an ethereal quality to the arms and veins that a more matched shade couldn't achieve. It speaks to the organic nature of costume making – keeping an open mind and constantly experimenting until all parts come together.

"The crown's design began with a drawing of some that followed the theme of a butterfly's wing. I had a strong vision for the crown: it needed to have the voluptuous quality with the sense of a stained-glass window to the color, and the beading was to drape in three layers around her Elven ears – to emphasize these delicate Elven features. Jasmine Wilson, the jewelry designer, and I worked closely for three weeks on the crown. My original design ranged out, but we found that the crown had a more interesting quality when it sat closer to the head. Jasmine's work on the crown took it to an extraordinary level, allowing a dream to be realized, that an Elven queen's crown would be like no other."

ARAGORN'S CORONATION
Digital matte painting and composite
Karen deJong

"This temporary composite is Aragorn's POV shot, looking out over the throng and east from the Court of Ships toward the snow-capped-in-along Mordor mountains. The White Tree is now in flower, signifying the king's return, and if you look closely, you can see another happy couple, Eowyn and Faramir, just behind the right-hand Fountain Guard."



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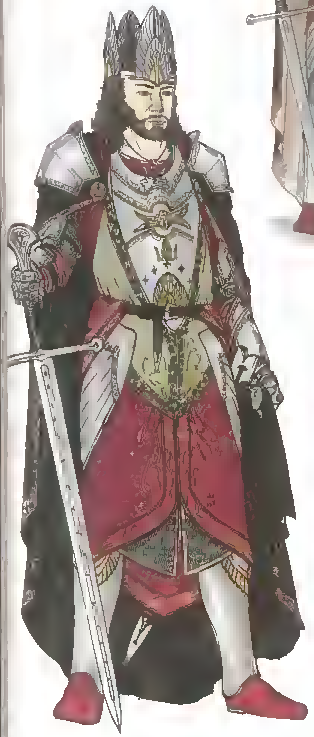
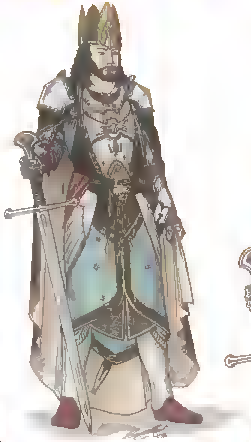
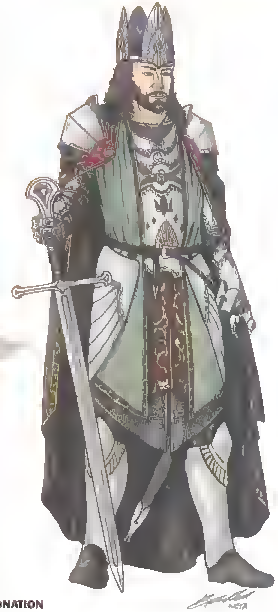
GIMLI'S CORONATION ROBES
Costume design
Nalia Dickson

"We went all-out with this, to represent the rebirth dandy at the heart of every Dwarf. We wanted it to be as if Gimli had gone back to his home and found his most special garments. We designed intricate and ornate layers of embroidery for the velvet blue samurai and edge of his coat. Everything about this garment was slightly over the top, including the rings on his fingers."







ARAGORN'S CORONATION
Concepts
Ben Woollen

"The idea here was to put a figure that could only be that of a king. The crown is the same shape as Isildur's from the prologue. In fact, what we've done is use a lot of components from Isildur's armor in this design: the pauldrons, breastplate, tassets, right down to the greaves, gloves and vambraces. This armor has probably been stored in a vault, maintained and polished, and Aragorn's eventual acceptance of his place in the continuing history of Middle-earth is signified by his wearing the ancestor's armor. We lowered the high neckline of this armor as worn by Isildur so that we could see the trinket still around Aragorn's neck, and developed some richly embroidered cloth of various cuts and colors, as shade befit a king of Gondor.

"The main picture was the one Viggo himself preferred: so the colors here are the most understated. The red is quite subdued, and the deep green is complementary but soft, so that, as regal and beautiful as it is, it's not an overly showy piece. It has to be beautiful and it has to be awake, but it's as understated as you could get away with and still have it cast the king. I think we end up with a less armored figure otherwise because he's not leading his people into war now; he's hoping to lead them into peace."

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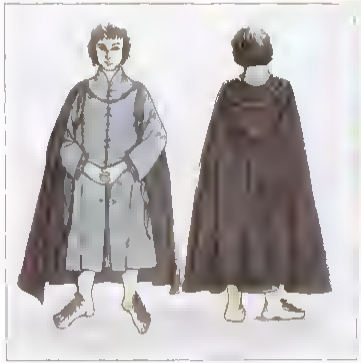
EOWYN'S CORONATION GOWN
Costume design
Nglia Dickson
"I took the gold, which is always a detail in Rohan royal clothes and made it the signature of the gown — so pressing the joy of the day. The dress is made from a silk bagtaffe, dyed gold with silk matte lining. We designed specific embroidery for the edge of the cloak, the necklace and the belt, based on the flower of Rohan, and the sun seen in three different golds, with small red glass beads throughout. We hand threaded and stitched small pearls round the sleeve ends, neck edge and belt. The arm bindings are hand-plaited gold thread. Eowyn wears her crown and necklace, made from the leaves and flowers of Rohan."



FRODO – THE RETURN HOME
Costume design
Nglia Dickson
"Frodo's costume for this scene represented clothing gifted to the hobbits from the Elves, as those their heroism and saved them hence in grand manner. Much experimentation went into these fabrics. These pieces were filmed very early on film one, and I had been working in quite complex overdye techniques, trying for both color with an antique quality. We carried this idea over for the Elves using a bleach paste to create the damage in the velvet. It is a very difficult medium, with many attempts needed to get close to the original concept. However, as this scene its very unusuness worked for us, helping to create the sense of jewel-like coloring and tactical quality. The beautiful green and purple colors used in these costumes were perfect for Frodo, with those exceptional eyes."

BILBO
Costume design
Nglia Dickson
"Meant to convey both sentiment and frailty, like a poem."

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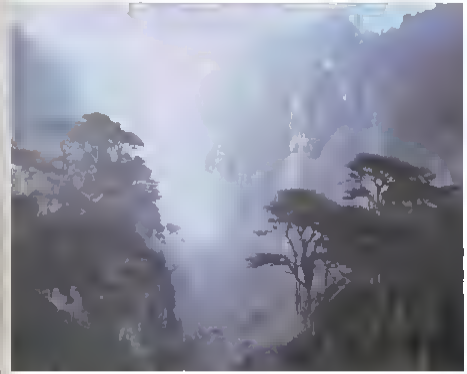
◇ RIVENDELL
Digital matte painting
Dylan Cole
"This painting of the Rivendell valley at night was for an establishing shot as which Arwen and Elrond are discussing the reforging of Narsil. It was abandoned in favor of a late afternoon look, which is why this painting is unfinished."

◇ ARWEN'S DYING GOWN
Costume design
Nglia Dickson
"In this combination of dusky rose and midnight blue, Arwen's character rests at the brink of death. We used antique lace embroideries around the neck and sleeves, over-dyed and then layered silk with more embroidery to affect both weight and fullness. It needed to express Arwen caught between two worlds, the exquisite otherworldliness of the Elves and the weight of her love for Aragorn and humankind, which leads her to the near-sacrifice."

◇ ARWEN
Costume design
Nglia Dickson
"Only Liv Tyler would wear a cloak of small sample swatches. We had been experimenting with the hood shape of the cloak, wanting a style specifically for the Elven world, for Elrond, Arwen and Legolas. When Liv wrapped the hood about her face it became two soft watery frames, quite luminous and biblical. In the scene in which we see her wearing this the audience is not sure who it is — a dark-wooded rippling across the staircase finally to reveal that amazing face. Underneath it is a blue-black silk gown, with a gold tattoo detail on the wrists."



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HOBBITON
Digital matte painting
Max Dennison
"This takes us back to the green and placid fields of the Shire and Hobbiton. The painting provided a backdrop to a number of shots near the end of the film, when the hobbits return to the Shire. It is evening here, and life resumes the same."

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THE GREY HAVENS
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is an early drawing of the Grey Havens and is the drawing that was shown to the actors as an indication of what they would be looking at when the blue screen was replaced in the finished scene. Although it would be another two years before this particular miniature was built and shot, Peter kept referring to this drawing, and the construction of the miniature reflects that."

THE GREY HAVENS
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is another view of the Grey Havens, showing the miniature version of the dock and its surroundings, as well as a wider view of the world area. There is something familiar in the landscape, but the architecture, and the light that will suffuse it, has a soft Mediterranean quality. We have been looking at paintings by J.M.W. Turner and Claude Lorrain as inspiration for the serene and poignant atmosphere of these scenes, as well as dreamy anticipations of our own future journeys."

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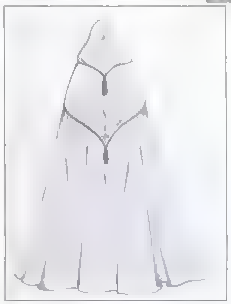
THE GREY HAVENS
Sketch
Alan Lee
"The Elven boat that waits at the dock to make the final voyage to Valinor was built as a large-scale miniature and is one of the most beautiful objects that Weta made for the film. John Burke has a passion for sailing and a deep knowledge of boat-building, so he was eager to devote his time and skills to creating it.

THE GREY HAVENS
Sketch
Alan Lee
"This is the fountain which the remaining members of the Fellowship sit past on the way down to the dock. Tolkien describes them passing through a garden before arriving at the boat, so we made a pleasant little departure lounge."



GALADRIEL'S LEAVING CLOAK AND DRESS
Costume design
Ngila Dickson
"We looked for a wax shape here, a stylized hood and intricate cornelli work are the special parts than the cloak. It is made from a burnished silk, varied to silver green-gray. The dress went through several transitions. Its original style as seen in the drawings was to continue the leaf shape through into a nuptialness, over a very fine silk gown. Sometimes, however, the original concept simply doesn't work and I chose to abandon it in favor of a dress—luxuriously beaded and belted with a silk chiffon drape at the neck. Although there is only a glimpse of the dress in the film, I felt it needs more typified Galadriel in the upside peeking out from the cloak."

ELVEN SWAN SHIP
Concept
Ben Wootten
"This is a design for an Elven boat found at the Grey Havens. I used an Egyptian influence from with the high bow and stern, and the steering rudders very high up on the little aft deck. This was a larger ship than the one they went with in the end; I was looking at the encouraging question of the vessel, because they're sailing to the Undying Lands, an it's big with a large sail area, not still graceful. It has a strong swan motif running through it, from the curled neck at the bow, almost a [illegible] to the wing shape halfway down the side. I wanted something very elegant and very [illegible] although it has a Middle Eastern feel, it does not seem like a boat of the earth. We [illegible] of Rivendell in the cabin's structure, and if we look closely at midship, just above [illegible] see a couple of people standing at the rail, giving a sense of its size."

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THE GREY HAVENS
Sketches and digital artwork
Alan Lee
"Images for the last shots in this sequence, in which the remaining hobbits watch the ship depart. This has turned out to be a more complex environment than I'd pictured when reading the books: but the spectacle of everything our heroes and hero through, in and at the mouth of the canyon, called out for something grander than just a garden and a dock.

"It is also more complex because of the number of different elements that have to be composited together: two miniatures built at different scales, a miniature boat, a set for the live action, water — real as and as digitally created — and remote photographs and paintings [left]."

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THE GREY HAVENS
Environment studies
Jeremy Bennett

"Are of a number of color studies exploring the look of the Grey Havens, and how they should be lit, for the Miniature Department. When conceiving the environment, we were thinking of I.M.H. Turner, so the one above is my attempt to capture his masterly quality of light. The small painting is a more finished version of the environment, incorporating miniature elements. I was giving some thought to how the miniature would look in the far distance, with the setting sun streaming in from the West."

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Afterword

[illegible]

[illegible]

Peter Jackson
Wellington, 2003

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Credits

THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE RETURN OF THE KING

Conceptual Designers
Alan Lee
John Howe

Production Designer
Grant Major

Costume Designer
Ngila Dickson

Jewellery Designer
Jasmine Wilson

Director of Miniatures Photography
Alex Funke

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Jamie Beswarick
Shaun Bolton
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Senior Matte Painters
Roger Kupelian
Dylan Cole
Karen deJong
Ronn Brown
Matthew Raynault
Yanick Dusseault

Massive
Joosten Knypers

Senior Compositors
Jim Bowen
Matt Welland

Compositors
Masaki Mitchel
Sean Schur
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GORGEPARD

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